



Media Release

17 November 2009

Forestry the answer to soaking up the agriculture – CPRS emissions burden

The Federal Government's decision to exempt agriculture, Australia's second biggest emitting sector, from the CPRS will mean that our economy will have to find ways to cover the 90 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emitted by the sector each year if it is to achieve its long term emissions targets.

"Forestry, Australia's only carbon positive industry, is not exempt from the CPRS and is ready to play a big role in abating the emissions from its land sector neighbours as well as other sectors in the economy", said Allan Hansard, CEO of the National Association of Forest Industries (NAFI).

Our sustainably managed native forests and plantations store carbon. The wood products we derive from these sustainably managed forests and plantations are renewable and also store carbon for long periods of time. In addition, the energy we can make from the wood waste from our sustainable operations is renewable and can replace energy made from fossil fuels.

But we need some new thinking on this by the Government and the Opposition in relation to how forestry is recognised by climate change policy.

NAFI estimates that the forest industries could abate around 20 percent of our economy's carbon emissions by 2020. This would go a long way to helping the economy cover the additional emissions burden from leaving agriculture out of the CPRS.

We understand the situation the agricultural sector is in. Having to reduce emissions either through reductions in farming activities or by buying carbon credits rather than being able to offset their emissions through their own abatement approaches, such as increasing soil carbon, would have added significantly to their cost of production.

However, because of the uncertainty of the science and accounting behind these approaches, it may be years, or even decades before farmers can fully pursue these options for reducing carbon emissions from their production activities. This is where the forest industry is well placed to step up and meet the additional emissions challenge we face now and assist the rural sector in the transition to a lower emissions future.

There are a broad range of tree planting and forestry activities that can be undertaken on agricultural land to increase carbon storage in vegetation and enhance overall farm productivity and amenity, such as provision of shade and shelter for livestock and soil and water conservation.

In addition, the agricultural sector as well as the whole economy will benefit from many of the forest industry initiatives, especially on afforestation, bioenergy and the production of biochar. These initiatives not only soak up and lock up carbon but they create much needed jobs in rural and regional Australia. We are leading the way and can assist farmers in being able to also take advantage of these initiatives.

There is now a renewed urgency for the Government to recognise and seek the full benefits our sustainably managed forests and plantations can deliver in addressing Australia's carbon emissions challenge. We are

Ph (02) 6285 3833 Fax: (02) 6285 3855 Email: james.gray@nafi.com.au Internet: www.nafi.com.au

ready to work constructively with the Government, the Opposition parties, the agricultural sector and other sectors of our economy to achieve these outcomes.

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Media contact: James Gray **0408 940 935** or **02 6285 3833** james.gray@nafi.com.au