

Warm response to CALM's farm forestry course

A NEW course recently brought together three key groups of people in farm forestry—those who influence farmers' decision making, those who provide farm forestry services and forestry farmers themselves.

The three-day Introduction to Farm Forestry course showed participants how this business venture worked, and who the key contacts were for specialist support.

Agriculture WA's Bunbury Regional Economist Peter Eckersley and CALM Busselton Farm Forestry Unit Manager Richard Moore designed the course, in collaboration with Bridgetown Farm Forester David Jenkins of Jenkins Agroforestry Developments.

Field visits

The course was based in Bridgetown and involved mainly field visits. On the first day participants inspected several examples of farm forestry and heard from the farmers involved why they had gone into this particular business venture and what they were getting out of it.

The second day focused on the timber industry and markets for wood. Several processing plants were visited, including a pine sawmill and a post-treatment plant.

Day three concentrated on the factors to be considered in developing long-term plans that incorporate commercial tree crops with other farming activities.

Participants met key players in farm forestry development, extension and operations, in



Inspecting sawn pine are, from left, Dave Gardner (CALM, Manjimup), Gary Hartnett (CALM, Northern Pine), Michelle Long (Consultant), David Guille (CALM, Northern Pine), Tom Mitchell and Peter Eckersely (AgWest), Cathy Lyons (Land Conservation District Committee member), Ryan Denham (AgWest), Richard Hartwell (Whittakers Pine Mill Supervisor), Richard Moore (CALM Farm Forestry Unit), Andrew McLaughlin (AgWest), David Jenkins (farm forester and course co-ordinator), Pat Hatfield (Rivercare, Bunbury) Mark Lush (Lower West Sharefarms). Photo by Ben Rose

both government agencies and in private enterprise.

CALM presenters were Senior Technical Officer Bob Hingston, Farm Plan Advisor John Winchcombe and Farm Forestry Facilitator Glenn Batty, all from the Department's Busselton Farm Forestry Unit.

Presenters from Agriculture WA included Bunbury Catchment Hydrology Manager Richard George, Catchment Hydrology Technical Officer Don Bennett and Manjimup Project Officer Andrew McLaughlin.

Feedback from participants was very positive. Keith and

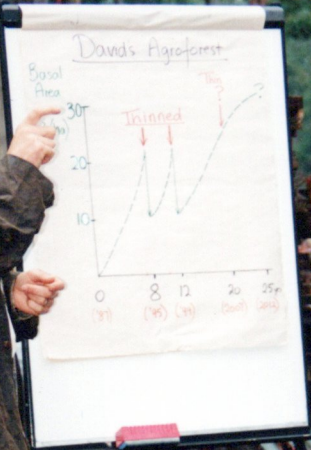
Trudy Clothier, who run a plant nursery, were enthusiastic in their praise of the course.

"It was a steep learning curve for us, as we knew very little about what was involved after the actual tree-growing process, but it was well worth the time and effort," Trudy said.

"We came away with a much clearer understanding of all aspects of the operation, right through to marketing the product. Also we have a lot of farmers coming to us for advice, so talking with farmers like David Jenkins and others, who'd made farm forestry a profitable venture for themselves, was

probably the most useful part of the course for us."

Further courses are planned, and anyone interested in finding out when and where they will be held should telephone Richard Moore on (08) 9752 1677, fax him on (08) 9754 1675 or email him at: richard.mo@calm.wa.gov.au



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already written

up & in

of News

March/April
1999.

Introduction to farm forestry

By Michael Power
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An introduction to farm forestry training course was recently held in Albany and attended by landcare, agriculture and farm forestry extension workers from the Great Southern Region. The course was a collaborative effort between the Farm Forestry Unit, Jenkins Agroforestry Developments and AGWEST, and was funded by the Commonwealth Farm Forestry Program. The aim of the course was to introduce participants to the spectrum of issues involved in farm forestry from planning and design, through to implementation, management, monitoring, harvesting and marketing. During the three day course participants visited farms, demonstration sites, mills and processing plants, and networked with farm foresters, industry representatives, and government research and extension officers involved in farm forestry.

The first day was spent touring farms in the Albany region to look at tree crops such as bluegums, radiata pine, eucalypt post and sawlog production, Maritime pine, oil mallees, and biodiversity plantings. On the second day the group traveled to the Manjimup region to visit a range of wood processing facilities including Pempine, Bunnings Forest Products Diamond Mill, Appadene Forest Products at Manjimup, and Timber Treaters. Day three saw the group tour David and Dianne Jenkins' agroforestry farm at Bridgetown before returning home to Albany.

The nineteen participants included staff from South Coast Sharefarms, AGWEST, Water and Rivers Commission, industry, shires, and Community Landcare Coordinators. Many participants had little previous exposure to forestry and found the tour fascinating and extremely worthwhile. Comments from participants included: "The course very competently covered the full process from farmer to mill including marketing. The dryland options were also appreciated." And "I am confident I'll be able to assist farmers more confidently now after doing this course."

A similar course was held in Bridgetown last December and another may be held later this year. The introductory courses play an important role in educating both government and non-government extension agents who advise the farming community. The aim is that these extension agents will become advocates for farm forestry and stimulate adoption by farmers.

PHOTO

Photo caption:

Richard Moore, Technical Manager with the Farm Forestry Unit at Busselton, talks about silviculture at the Introduction to Farm Forestry Course