

Case study for Native Trees on Farms in Northland

Doug Lane owns a sheep and beef farm in the headwaters of the Kaeo River. He has long been involved in farm forestry, and has planted thousands of trees on the property. "This land was cleared with the encouragement of Government land development loans in the late 1970s and early 1980s, but it's always been marginal country. I'm turning that around and planting the whole lot in trees again. I've taken all the steep land out so that the remainder of the farm can be reached by a ground spreader", Doug says. This is important because aerial topdressing is not an option as there are no air strips nearby.

Beef cattle are not moved as much as dairy herds, but Doug would still like to keep them out of waterways and install water troughs for them. His current scheme is to fence off as many of the waterway edges as possible as cattle crossings are known to be significant pollution sources. He's been doing his bit to improve water quality through a range of land management measures which are helping to make farming easier for him as well. "I don't want stock getting stuck in gullies."

Doug's ongoing tree planting program aims to have shade available for stock in every paddock. "It makes a much more pleasant work environment," he says. He originally planted trees that he could harvest quickly such as pines and cypress, but now he tends to plant more native trees. "I've always put \$2000 aside each year for planting trees. Native trees are much slower to establish but I tend to have little problem with them," he says.

He has also created several Queen Elizabeth II covenants to protect existing bush remnants on the steepest parts of the farm. "The QEII Trust helps with paying for half of the cost of the project."



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native trees on farms



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Indigenous species have a place in our production landscapes.

This project aims to gather information from farmers and land managers on the useful functional roles that native plants have within their farm enterprises.

The project will seek knowledge from farmers who have experience in successfully utilising native plants, compile and distribute that knowledge in both printed and electronic media.

An invitation

Using native trees to improve your farm - upcoming workshops

Local farmers are invited to an interactive workshop about using native trees to improve farms. This is an excellent opportunity to talk with researchers and practitioners about the benefits of planting natives. There will be presentations from researchers and active farmers on planting and management of natives for various uses on farms.

Waikato: Paeroa War Memorial Hall, Tuesday 5th April or Otorohanga Kiwi House, Friday 8th April

Northland: Monday 11th April, Barge Park, Whangarei or Tuesday 12th April, Kaeo Memorial Hall, Kaeo

Times: 9:30am - 2.00pm, morning tea and lunch provided.

Please RSVP to Nardene Berry (Waikato) or Helen Moodie (Northland) for catering purposes



Sustainable Farming Fund
www.maf.govt.nz/sff

Project plan

The project is operating across two regions, Waikato and Northland. In each region the following stages are being implemented:

2004:

Engaging land managers with experience in biodiversity integration to document their knowledge and experience with using native trees on farms (“what has been done”).

Early 2005:

Incorporating wider community knowledge and experience in the context of a workshop series.

Late 2005:

Applying the knowledge gained to regular farm systems (“what could be done”).

2006:

The final stage of the project will be the dissemination of all the information gained from both regions to the wider rural community and policy agencies.

Already we know that many farmers invest time and money in managing native plants, be it fencing forest remnants, weed and pest control, or establishing new plantings. Their reasons for engaging in such activities are many and varied, and the first stage of this project aimed to find out exactly what those reasons were. A series of small workshops were held during April and May, to which we invited farmers who are well recognised for their experience in managing indigenous vegetation. There were three workshops in Northland (Whangarei, Kaitaia and Kerikeri) involving 25 participants, and four workshops in the Waikato (Te Kuiti, Cambridge, Waihi and Hamilton) involving 35 participants.

At each workshop the programme included brainstorming of reasons why people were managing native plants in various ways, group discussion questioning what key factors had helped or hindered farmers in their management, including information sources

Benefits of using native trees on farms

Reasons why participants had become involved in managing and planting native trees on their farms, over 70 specific items were cited, and these were organised into a number of broad themes:

General:

Appropriate land management
Stewardship and heritage
Personal interest and satisfaction
Stock management and welfare
Conservation and habitat
Financial
Environmental outcomes
Recreation
Education and research
Land value and saleability

Specific Examples:

erosion control
provide resource for future
challenge of growing trees
reduce mustering time
attract native birds
timber harvesting
water quality
hunting
school group visits
capital gain

Native tree information sources that assisted farmers:

Key sources of information for farmers wanting to find out about managing native trees (with number of groups citing the source, out of a total of 16 groups).

Regional Council publications & staff	15
Books(e.g. Metcalfe, Mortimer, Salmon)	11
Personal experience	11
Farm Forestry Assn.	10
Named individuals (consultants, enthusiasts)	9
QEII National Trust	8
Other farmers & neighbours	8
Nursery catalogues & staff	7
Local examples & observations	6
Farm Environment Awards (Waikato)	6
Landcare group	5
Scientists	5
Family members	5

Other NGOs cited:

Forest & Bird (3), NZ Landcare Trust (3), Fish & Game (1), Native Forest Restoration Trust (1), Botanical Society (1), Catchment Trust Board (1)

Other sources cited:

Internet (3), DoC (2), District Council (2), Environment Centre (1), Contractors (1), MAF (1), Dairy Exporter (1), Tramping Club (1)

Case study for Native Trees on Farms in the Waikato

David and Jan Findlay are sheep and beef farmers, with a few dairy grazers, on 600 acres in Whitehall. Their land is generally rolling to steep Maeroa ash.

A very high priority for them when they first arrived in 1995, was to fence the areas of bush. They started planting primarily for enhancing water quality and aesthetic value in 1996 and consider planting natives an ongoing project. The riparian planting provides food and habitat for aquatic life and birds and contributes to shelter for stock.

Although Jan considers their plantings to be in its infancy, one lesson learned is that site preparation with spray is essential. Her initial reluctance to spray the proposed plan sites has meant the tasks of planting and maintenance are more onerous than what they need be. She now makes good use of old carpet (1st choice) and recycled cardboard/thick layers of newspaper as mulch to suppress weeds.

There is a need for more protection for stock from the sun.

Like any farming enterprise, competing aspects vie with each other and financial constraints restrict the planting of specimen trees. For example, anything that makes stock movement easier and safer gets preference dollar wise.

Jan enjoys a huge amount of personal satisfaction in helping heal the planet. There were no birds when the Findlays first arrived, but now birdsong is frequent and in the early evening, a symphony of croaking frogs can often be heard.

The work David and Jan are doing links with the local land care group who carrying out extensive possum control. This goes hand in hand with natural regeneration.

After contouring a hill in 2004, the remaining rough bit is being withdrawn from production and will be fenced and planted this year. This will create a corridor of vegetation that will link with another planting that faces the Kaimais.