



Media Release

Friday, 15th October, 2010

MINISTER NICK MCKIM LAUNCHES PROJECT TO HELP FARMERS UNDERSTAND FARM CARBON ACCOUNTS

A new project aims to give farmers in northern Tasmania an overall 'carbon picture' of their farm.

The Carbon Story project is part of NRM North's Property Management Planning climate change module and was launched today by Climate Change Minister Nick McKim.

NRM North Chief Executive Officer, James McKee, said Carbon Story calculated a farm's annual emissions, sequestrations and preserved carbon.

"It looks at all the components of a farm's annual carbon cycle including livestock, fertilisers, electricity and different soil types.

"This information is presented through maps and graphs and farmers can use this to easily understand the impact of current and changed land management scenarios on carbon emissions and sequestrations." Mr McKee said.

The project has been funded by NRM North through the Tasmanian Government's Climate Connect Program and the Australian Government's FarmReady Program and has been seven months in development.

Mr McKim said Carbon Story was the culmination of NRM North's project under the first round of Climate Connect.

"Initially the project targeted eight farms to implement emissions and energy reduction strategies.

"The benefits of that project are now being shared with the broader farming community through the Farm Carbon Story approach.

"This is a great example of how ideas that start small can lead to big changes and how the knowledge gained can be shared with others in similar situations." Mr McKim said.

The Farm Carbon Story approach uses existing national and local carbon calculators which are all developed in accordance with the National Carbon Accounting Guidelines.

Carbon Story is unique in the way it brings these existing calculators (and any future calculators) into one simple "front end".

It uses information which is already routinely compiled as part of a well delivered property management plan for example, farm map, soil types, land use areas (cropping, native bush, grasslands)

Project Coordinator, Rachel Brown, from Agricultural Resource Management (ARM) said it was good to be able to put farm emissions in the context of other activities that non-farmers understand.

"For example, annual emissions from a mixed enterprise in the Northern Midlands were calculated to be equivalent to the daily emissions of planes flying between Hobart and Melbourne."

James Walch from "Stewarton" was one of the farmers involved with the project.

"If we are going to have an informed debate and contribute to the solutions for climate change we need to have a better understanding of our own production systems. Farmers are an important part of the climate change solution." Mr Walch said.

Mr McKee said Carbon Story demonstrated the valuable role farmers played as 'carbon stewards.'

"Farmers are often portrayed as being major carbon polluters because of livestock emissions.

"It is important farmers are recognised for the large carbon reserves stored on farms through good land management such as crop rotations, permanent pastures, preserved native grasslands, remnant bush and planting of shelter belts.

"The Carbon Story approach will ensure that farmers have the knowledge and tools to work with any future carbon system that may emerge at a national or state level." Mr McKee said.

Ends

For more information contact:
Melissa Lewarn, Manager – Community Engagement & Communications, NRM North, 6333
7776 or 0427 354 058