

Carbon as an on-farm resource

ALISHA FOGDEN

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LANDHOLDERS need to start thinking about the carbon implications and economic value of their decisions when making on-farm changes, says Canopy executive director Leonard Cohen.

"If farmers think about everything they do - and record it - the sale of credits could be valuable in the future," he said.

Mr Cohen said while an emissions trading scheme was postponed until 2013, the Australian voluntary carbon market was growing.

Last year, more than 6 million carbon credits were sold at up to \$40 each in the voluntary market.

Under the National Carbon Offset Standard, which came into effect on July 1 this year, the Federal Government decided that only landholders would be able to create government-approved carbon credits for the voluntary carbon market - something primary producers could benefit from.

"The voluntary market has been the poorer cousin of the ETS," Mr Cohen said.

"It has been reported in the media, but hardly any primary producers know about it, which is disappointing.

"Carbon credits are not a river of gold, but they can provide a little plus to your business if done properly."

To help primary producers understand how they can benefit from the NCOS, a series of workshops are being held across South Australia, hosted by Mr Cohen.

The costs to attend are reimbursed under the Federal Government's FarmReady Program.

Mr Cohen has had extensive experience in measuring and managing carbon emissions and has advised landholders, corporations and government in the fields of carbon offsets, vegetation assessment and policy.

He hopes to highlight to attendees the opportunities and risks involved in carbon markets.

"Most of the people that have attended these meetings have had no idea about carbon accounting," he said.

"They either haven't cared or no one has taken the time out to teach it because it can be hard to understand.

"There has also been a major failure by the government to educate people."

Mr Cohen believes NRM Boards will be crucial to further inform the public.

"NRM staff have been told how carbon markets work and what actions will help to increase carbon potential on-farm," he said.

"If they can't answer your questions, then they will know someone who does."

Murtho almond grower Tom Martin attended the course at Berri to learn about sustainable management of carbon on-farm and how his Omega Orchards business could benefit.

"Farmers need to analyse their carbon performance because actions that become mandated in the future will not be able to be traded as a carbon credit," he said.

"But if you have a carbon plan in place, then you will be ahead of the game."

* Details: www.canopy.org.au

* Upcoming carbon courses:

August 20: Streaky Bay

August 24: Port Augusta

August 26: Maree

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Until the official carbon accounting standards are capable of providing a "true and fair view" of the carbon balance in landscape, and they give full credit for carbon capital accumulated prior to 1990 then forget it. My family has been socking away more than 600 tonnes of carbon a year since my father bought the neighbour's bare paddock in 1942. And until we get full credit for every last kilo of standing wood, and every kilo in every fence post, pole, shed, yard, bridge and intact sawdust pile that still has its carbon intact, then these carbon promoters can take a run and jump.

Posted by **Ian Mott**, 13/08/2010 9:30:36 AM, on Stock Journal

Yes, I agree with Ian Mott. The National Carbon Offset Standard, by the Federal Labor Government apparently, sure just shows up as another 'back door' ETS!! Mr Cohen says the voluntary market has been the poorer cousin of the ETS. Weee!!!... The 'Pied Pipers' are very busy & remember the story of The Emperor & His New Clothes! Jillian Spring, Billinudgel NSW.

Posted by **Jillian Spring**, 13/08/2010 1:16:26 PM, on Stock Journal

Oh Goody!! I'm going to make a fortune. No!! Oops!! I forgot, the Federal Government already stole the carbon in my trees and claimed they met Kyoto requirements.

Posted by **Archibald**, 14/08/2010 8:57:50 AM, on Stock Journal

Hi Ian and Jillian, I agree that past actions by landholders should be wherever possible credited. Some of these actions could have happened well before 1990. The purpose of our program is to identify such actions for primary producers and to advise them as far as possible about any "Pied Piper" or other risks. Good record keeping and building carbon planning into farm plans is a way to prevent carbon saving actions from going unrewarded in the future.

Posted by **Leonard Cohen**, 15/08/2010 12:38:26 PM, on Stock Journal

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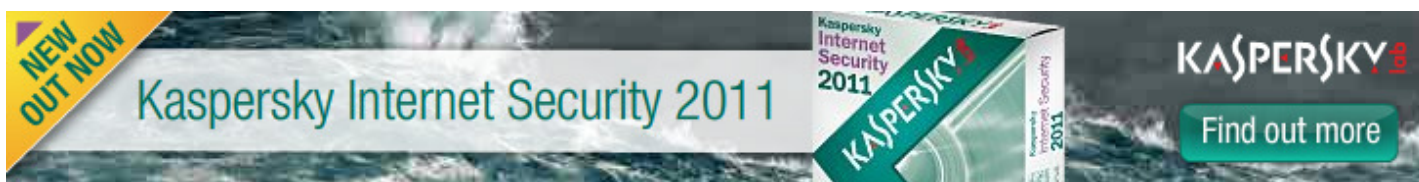


PASTORALIST John Lunn (pictured with Canopy executive director Leonard Cohen) attended the carbon course at Berri to see if he could claim carbon credits from changes he was planning to make on-farm.



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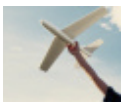
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