



A guide to creating a farm woodlot



Quality timber from a farm woodlot

Woodlots provide many economic, environmental and aesthetic benefits to the farm and the Southland region. Valuable timber can be grown and jobs created throughout the typical 25 to 40 year growth cycle.

Environmental gains come from erosion control, shelter and increased biodiversity. Woodlots can be fun places for families to play and create a nice place to work. To establish a woodlot that achieves these values it is important to gather information and create a plan that covers the life cycle of the woodlot.

► **Location of woodlots**

There will be many options available on your farm but with a little forward planning you will be able to prioritise the best sites. Does the site fit in with farm operations and will it provide extra benefits like weed suppression or paddock shelter? Try to avoid shading prime productive land or

upsetting neighbours by reducing their view. You need to have good vehicle and foot access to establish and maintain the woodlot, and importantly, in the future establish roading for heavy machinery to access and harvest the trees.

► Environmental considerations

To ensure you get the environmental benefits from your woodlots and not future headaches, check out any associated rules and recommended good management practices. Key good practices are to have unplanted buffers along any waterways or wetlands to protect banks, indigenous plants and reduce blockages from fallen trees. Ensure all roading now or in the future does not direct sediment into waterways, and during harvest minimise soil damage and keep slash out of flood zones.

Some exotic trees can spread seed over long distances so look at the prevailing winds and ensure this is not a problem to neighbouring farms or conservation areas. Make sure you have a plan to manage pest plants and animals to reduce plant losses and impacts on farm infrastructure.

► National Environmental Standards for Plantation Forestry (NES-PF)

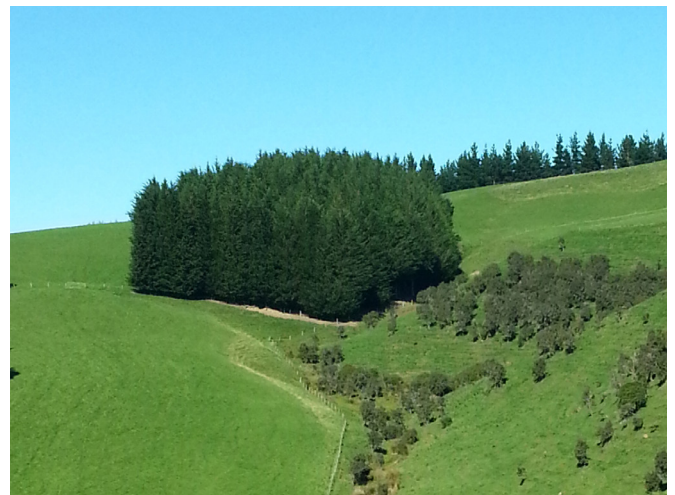
The NES-PF aims to maintain or improve the environmental outcomes associated with managing plantation forestry activities. The regulations apply to forestry that is planted for commercial purposes, is at least one hectare, and will be harvested. It also applies to all forestry infrastructure.

Plantation forestry operators are required to submit written notices and plans for afforestation, earthworks, river crossings, forest quarrying, harvesting, replanting, wilding species and slash traps. Check out Environment Southland's website for more details – www.es.govt.nz.

► What to plant in a woodlot

There are two main options when it comes to what type of tree to plant, either short-term commercial exotic trees or long-term native trees. For short term trees, distance from a mill or port makes a big difference in profits. Soils, topography, altitude and climate also dictate what tree species will thrive in the selected site. Today there are a number of selected cultivars designed to match requirements.

Native trees are a good option for a long-term plan, especially in challenging locations. Native trees can provide a food source for bees, enhance water supplies and be selectively logged for high value timbers. Plant suppliers and forestry advisers can help with this important decision.



Typical Southland farm woodlot

► Woodlot establishment and maintenance tips

To give your trees a good start, make sure fencing is stock proof and pest plants have been controlled. Spot spray grass or clear gaps to plant in and control weeds with herbicide until trees are well established.

Be vigilant with pest animal control to minimise damage to trees that can reduce commercial value in the future. Plant commercial tree seedlings within a day of being lifted from the nursery and keep cool and moist when out of the ground. Add some fertiliser in the planting hole or cut if the site is nutrient deficient. Stocking rates for commercial trees will be site specific with most at 800-900 stems per hectare. Native plant density will vary depending on goals like erosion control or long-term quality timber production.

► One Billion Trees programme

The New Zealand Government has developed the One Billion Trees programme to increase tree planting across New Zealand. The goal is to double planting rates to reach one billion by 2028. The programme is led by Te Uru Rākau - Forestry New Zealand within the Ministry for Primary Industries and supports landowners to grow both native and exotic trees. There is a focus on lowering the planting barriers currently faced by landowners and improving incentives to support the right trees, in the right place, for the right purpose, and create wider benefits across New Zealand.

More information

- National Environmental Standards for Plantation Forestry (NES-PF) – www.mfe.govt.nz
- One Billion Tree Programme – www.mpi.govt.nz
- Forestry and Farming – Beef + Lamb NZ website
- NZ Farm Forestry Association – www.nzffa.org.nz

Further assistance

For woodlot advice to suit your specific needs and locations, call us to arrange a free visit by Environment Southland's land sustainability team on 0800 76 88 45.