

Major Farm Forestry and Firewood Machinery Expo planned

A fortnight before Easter 2011, the Northern United Forestry Group (NUFG) will host a major Farm Forestry and Firewood Machinery Expo that is creating great interest across south eastern Australia.

A large crowd is expected to descend on the City of Greater Bendigo's 242ha farm forestry site at Huntly, north of Bendigo, where exhibitors will demonstrate a range of farm-scale machinery for thinning and harvesting farm forestry plantations on Friday 8 April. Planted between 1999 and 2001, the Huntly site showcases a range of low rainfall hardwoods, including sugar gum, swamp yate, river sheoak and red ironbark.

Combined with a speaker's program, a bioenergy discussion forum, along with demonstrations of small scale gassifiers and the latest in wood heating technology, the Expo has something for everyone.

According to Ian Rankin, NUGF President and a member of the organising committee, the Expo has three main objectives:

- To demonstrate to farm forestry industry stakeholders a range of farm forestry and firewood machinery available for use on farms;
- To raise awareness of the contribution 'farm forestry' and 'firewood from private plantations' can make to energy and a sustainable future; and
- To demonstrate the public value of firewood in efficient and sustainable home heating.

"NUFG first formed in 1998 and our group is seeing increasing interest in wood products and energy from trees grown on private land," says Ian. "We expect over 1,000 participants on the day, from farmers to scientists, students, government and non-government professionals, along with timber processors, firewood merchants, as well as consumers looking for an efficient wood heater."

"Nothing else of a similar nature is planned for 2011, so it really is a significant 'south eastern Australia' event. We also have two local sustainability groups based in Bendigo and Castlemaine that have large memberships interested in the proposed topics of firewood, bioenergy and the contribution of farm forestry to a sustainable future."

There has been strong interest from exhibitors, including manufacturers who will demonstrate farm-scale machinery. Marian Krainc, from Tajfun Australia, is bringing his remote control logging winch and firewood processing machine. People will be able to see how easily and safely logs can be winched out of a plantation and processed into firewood in a short time. A representative from Lucas Mill is another exhibitor who will process logs on their portable sawmill on the day.

The Expo will have a 'Talk Space' program featuring expert speakers who will talk on farm forestry (establishing, managing and marketing your trees), firewood (types, heating efficiency) and the role of trees in the design of sustainable landscapes. A 'Work Space' program is also planned featuring an in depth discussion on biofuels and bioenergy with Andrew Lang, convenor of the wood energy Group and World Bioenergy Association board member; and Liz Hamilton, from DPI, a Gottstein trust fellow who looked at the developments in the use of woody biomass for bioenergy in Canada and western USA during a 2009 study tour; plus representatives from a local biodiesel consortium.

Expo sponsors include the City of Greater Bendigo, the Victorian Department of Primary Industries, Australian Forest Growers, Trees Victoria and the North Central Catchment Management Authority.

Exhibitor sites are just \$100, with a limited number of powered sites available.

For more information see www.nufg.org.au or contact Mal Brown on 0419108817

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Photo caption

Ian Rankin, NUGF President, (inset) is one of many exhibitors who will demonstrate farm-scale machinery for thinning and harvesting farm forestry plantations. Ian has adapted a harvesting head with a hydraulically controlled chainsaw attached to his excavator.