

Guidance Note 8.1 : Harvest Plans

Spacing



A minimum inter-row spacing of 3m will aid efficient harvesting by allowing easier access and less damage to mallees in the row beside the one being harvested. Spacings of less than 2m will prevent access and so prevent harvesting.

An intra-row spacing of about 1.5 – 2 m appears to provide acceptable harvest yields at an acceptable cost of establishment. Closer spacings increase the costs of establishment and wider spacings are likely to make harvesting more difficult and potentially more expensive.

Layout

Longer rows and straighter rows will be more efficient to harvest. The penalty of harvesting short rows depends upon the circumstances, but if the harvester travels at 3 km per hour, harvesting cost per tonne of biomass for 100 metre long rows will be about 50% higher than the per tonne cost of harvesting 500 metre long rows, simply due to the time lost in turning the harvester and the haulout (chaser bin) at the end of each row.

Landings

Consider designing planting around the concept of landings, which will provide a focus for operations. The landing is where the biomass will be aggregated from surrounding planting and loaded on road trucks. Probably several farmers' biomass will be hauled to a common landing, so perhaps select a suitable landing site first and plant mallees in clusters around that point, so harvesting and transport is more efficient.

Preparation

Each row should be surveyed with differential GPS at planting to enable more efficient harvesting.

Rows should be cleared of rocks and other obstacles to make harvesting more efficient. It is cheaper to do this just prior to planting than just prior to harvesting.

Disclaimer:

This Guidance Note does not constitute a legal or statutory document. Nor does it purport to provide any legal or financial advice. It is not exhaustive and is intended as general guidance only. Users should consult the more detailed disclaimer in the Oil Mallee code of Practice, which also applies to this Guidance Note.

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Harvest Plans

The Harvest Plan should include information, where necessary, relating to:

- the location of the area(s) to be harvested (preferably by GPS);
- the type of harvesting system to be used;
- the period (dates) during which harvesting is to occur;
- location of landings, roads and tracks to be used and the direction of travel,
- harvesting operations: felling and extraction procedures,
- haulage route to be used on public roads;
- processing: management of waste,
- fire protection preparedness and response;
- seasonal and wet weather restrictions;
- restrictions and methods to prevent the spread of pests diseases and weeds.
- minimum safety requirements.
- silvicultural system to apply after harvest.

Where appropriate, the Harvest Plan must comply with the provisions of the Occupational Safety and Health Act 1988 and associated Regulations, the Bush Fires Act 1954, the Soil and Land Conservation Act 1945, the Environmental Protection Act 1986 and the Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947. Also they must comply with any planning requirement of Local Governments, and relevant safety codes for mallee crop harvesting.

Harvesting is paid for by farmers, either directly to the contractor, or indirectly through the farm-gate price.