

Media Release



FUTURE FARM
INDUSTRIES CRC
PROFITABLE PERENNIALS™ FOR AUSTRALIAN LANDSCAPES

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Harvester funding will go a long way to kick starting WA's Oil Mallee industry

Future Farm Industries CRC (FFI CRC) CEO Kevin Goss has welcomed the Western Australian Government's announcement of \$1.5 million of funding for the development of a prototype mallee harvester saying it is good news for the Oil Mallee industry.

"With this announcement by the Premier, the Western Australian Oil Mallee industry is now one step nearer to realising its fullest potential," Mr Goss said.

"This funding will help create a viable farm-to-factory supply chain for the State's emerging Oil Mallee industry."

An increase in demand to process Oil Mallee plantings has emphasised the need to develop innovative technologies, such as a harvester, to make the industry more commercially viable.

"The trees are there, thanks to the work of the Oil Mallee Association, the Department of Environment and Conservation and the Oil Mallee Company. Verve Energy's Integrated Wood Processing Demonstration plant near Narrogin has also proven Oil Mallees can be commercially processed into market-ready products while generating electricity," Mr Goss said.

"The research now needs to focus on developing technology that gets trees off the paddock and delivered to a processing plant efficiently. Already, companies are showing interest in what will be an innovative woody biomass harvester in terms of its scale and cost of operation."

As part of its *New Woody Crops* research program, FFI CRC is investigating ways to increase the viability of new and existing woody crop land uses to improve the economic, environmental and social outcomes for Australian agriculture. A research focus that is gaining momentum as farmers begin to seriously consider new income streams in a drying landscape.

"Part of the FFI CRC research program is to continue the work of the former Conservation and Land Management Department (now Department of Environment and Conservation), the Oil Mallee Company and the former Western Power (now Verve Energy), which were involved in designing the first prototype harvester," Kevin said.

"The first prototype has provided us with a good foundation to continue the research and overcome some of the technical challenges in processing mallees.

"This time round we are taking a 'chipper harvester' approach that incorporates techniques and concepts used in forestry and agricultural row-crop systems to develop a prototype harvester that cut trees at ground level and chips them in one continuous operation."

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Future Farm Industries Cooperative Research Centre aims to transform Australian agriculture and rural landscapes by developing and applying Profitable Perennials™ technologies to innovative farming systems and new regional industries.
