

Hatz Off!

Hair & Beauty
All hair and waxing services.



Jo Brumley and Tanya Kidd

GIFT VOUCHERS AVAILABLE

129 High Street, Terang
Phone 5592 1546



On the farm: Mark Veale, right, gives Shadow Minister for Climate Action Greg Hunt and Member for Wannon Dan Tehan a closer look at his farming methods. 2011D

Mark's magic soil

STORING carbon underground might seem like a rather complex and difficult way to cut Australia's emissions.

But Woorndoo farmers Julie and Mark Veale have put carbon sequestration theory into practice over several years, which made them an ideal choice to host the carbon community forum last Friday.

Since 2005, the couple has used carbon sequestration on their farm, which they say has made the land more resilient to harsh weather conditions.

Even without a government incentive scheme, Mark would have tried his hand on the carbon market in addition to improving land quality.

"We were seeing where there were higher carbon levels we were getting more growth, which would stand by us in big wet and dry spells," he said.

"At the same time I wanted to be in a position that if carbon trading got enough momentum to get into (carbon) trading."

However, with the advent of the global financial crisis, the Veales were unable to take the leap and turn a profit on their sustainable farming practices.

Even without a direct financial incentive, Mark said the change in farm management methods was well worth the effort.

The Veales have managed 2800 acres, 700 of which they leased, where they produce lamb, mutton and wool, and grow canola, wheat and barley. (From the start of July, the Veales began managing 7000 acres under a collaborative farming agreement with another family

business.)

Despite their business's diversification, Mark said the principles of sequestration remained the same across both cropping and pastures.

"In its most basic form, carbon sequestration is a residue of growing plants," he said.

"It's root/plant matter being broken down by microbes into the soil, forming humus (organic matter)."

“I'm a big believer in doing research; to research as much as possible as to what the impacts and implications will be on business, both positive and negative.**”**

Mark Veale

The Veales employ cell grazing and no till cropping - methods which make sustainable use of farmland - and the benefits of more growth and resilient land are common.

Mark said practices like cell grazing and no tillage did not increase costs, but education and change of management techniques were the price farmers would pay for change.

While Mr Veale learnt more about sustainable farming "on the go," knowledge was a key component of altering the farm's operations.

"I'm a big believer in doing research; to

research as much as possible as to what the impacts and implications will be on business, both positive and negative."

While the Veales have noticed visual difference in the land since they began sequestering carbon, they have not maintained any land with their old management system, and thus do not have a comparison.

In terms of measuring carbon levels over the long term, Mark has established a rough baseline by conducting random soil tests.

However, he said conducting a comprehensive organic carbon test would cost farmers tens of thousands of dollars - a price he wasn't willing to pay without the guarantee of earnings through government pricing or a robust market.

He also pointed out money from an abatement under the Direct Action Plan would not garner an immediate return, but would receive funds trickled down over a long-term government caveat on carbon stocks.

Regardless of financial motives, Mark will continue with sequestration as a sustainable farming measure. However, he said while the Coalition's abatement scheme would benefit farmers, "It won't be a big enough carrot" in its current form.

"It would be for me, it would be for most food producers and farm managers, but at the moment there's not enough incentive," he said.

"My reason for doing it was never about money.

"I see soil carbon sequestration being a good opportunity for farmers heading into the future, whether or not they believe in climate change."



SLM Law
LAWYERS & ADVISORS

Are you an Executor and need help?

Call us today!

119 Murray Street Colac ☎ 5231 9400
134 Manifold Street Camperdown ☎ 5593 1585
4/22 Pascoe Street Apollo Bay ☎ 5237 6176
19B Curdie Street Cobden ☎ 5595 1476
www.slmlaw.com.au

ONE STOP SHOP FOR FUEL EQUIPMENT

Sales and hire
Repairs and maintenance
35 years experience
Expert advice
Solve your problem by calling

KAVANAGH FUEL & PUMP REPAIRS

Serving Western Vic & Wimmera
24 hours 7 days a week
PHONE: 0438 525 500

**A volunteer's reward...
Apply for the Sue Hickey Memorial Grant 2011**

Community groups and individuals who volunteer their time to contribute to natural resource management across the Corangamite region are invited to apply for grants up to \$10,000.

The Corangamite Catchment Management Authority's **Sue Hickey Memorial Grant** was established in 2002 by the authority's board to recognise volunteerism in natural resource management and perpetuate the memory of a friend and colleague, Sue Hickey.

The grant provides assistance to members of the community for training, study tours and other forms of learning related to their voluntary work in natural resource management. Subject to assessment, more than one application may be accepted. The Sue Hickey Memorial Grant is open to individuals or community groups living and working within the Corangamite region. Individuals or groups applying for the grant do not require special qualifications.

Specific areas include land and waterway protection, enhancement and rehabilitation, and biodiversity conservation.

Initial inquiries and application kits are available from **Shirley Widdows, telephone: 5232 9100, email: shirley.widdows@ccma.vic.gov.au** or for further information visit our **website at www.ccma.vic.gov.au**

Applications for the 2011 grants close at **5pm on Friday, September 2** and should be forwarded to: Sue Hickey Memorial Grant, Corangamite CMA, PO Box 159, Colac, 3250.

The Mount Elephant Community Management Group used its 2010 Sue Hickey Memorial Grant to stage an education and awareness day marking 10 years since the community took ownership of the mount and set about restoring it.

For information about the Sue Hickey Memorial Grant 2011, please telephone 5232 9100 or visit www.ccma.vic.gov.au

