

ABC Rural Report
North & West Rural Report 13/05/09
By Penelope Bergen, Port Pirie

Exert from ABC website:

Bio information gathering

A bus full of 40 scientists and industry representatives have just spent two days in South Australia visiting farms in Lochiel, Snowtown, Kapunda and Greenock.

They've been assessing the results of biological farming systems using lignite - a form of woody, peat-like coal - as a fertilizer. Patron of the tour, former Governor General Major General Michael Jeffery, says they're gathering information to advise the government on the pending emissions trading scheme.

AUDIO

Audio can be accessed via this link: <http://www.abc.net.au/rural/regions/content/2007/s2568749.htm>

Copy below was recorded by LawrieCo

Headline

The former Governor General, Major General Michael Jeffery has just toured farms in the region in order to provide information to the pending trading emissions scheme.

Story

Penelope Bergen (reporter)

A bus full of 40 scientists and industry representatives have just spent two days in South Australia visiting farms in Lochiel, Snowtown, Kapunda and Greenock.

They've been assessing the results of biological farming systems using lignite - a form of woody, peat-like coal - as a fertilizer.

Patron of the tour is former Governor General and chairman of the Royal Flying Doctors Association, Major General Michael Jeffery, he says they're gathering information to advise the government on the pending emissions trading scheme.

Major General Michael Jeffery

They've used far less chemical, phosphates; they've practically done away with poison sprays and in some cases they are using no chemicals or poison sprays at all. In each case the productivity of the land has increased, and as has the fertility and the carbon content of the land, so I think that has been very pleasing to note.

Penelope Bergen (reporter)

So that has further implications in terms of greenhouse gas reduction

Major General Michael Jeffery

It encourages a much greater growth of plant life and encourages a much greater process of photosynthesis through the plants of drawing the carbon dioxide into the ground and then sequestering carbon into the ground quite quickly and in large quantities.

There is potential, I think very good potential, for this process to deal with a considerable amount of our carbon dioxide emissions from power plants and motor cars and that sort of thing.

Penelope Bergen (reporter)

Industry representative John White says greenhouse gas reduction has a big role to play in farming for the future.

Dr John White

We are explaining to government and we have former Governor General, Michael Jeffery, here who has looked into it and has confirmed in his mind that it all works and is a solution, so he is helping us communicate this to policy makers at state and federal level so this can become part of the greenhouse solution in Australia. Then we can demonstrate it and take it to the world.

Penelope Bergen (reporter)

Are you hoping that this is going to be a big contribution to the upcoming emissions trading scheme

Dr John White

It needs to be, it needs to be recognized. Farmers need to be allowed to opt in and trade their soil carbon to become a solution for Australia for the next 20, 30, 40 years so that we don't destroy our other productive industries with punitive carbon taxes, this can overcome that entire issue for the next few decades.

Penelope Bergen (reporter)

Industry representative John White speaking from the bus on the way from South Australia to Victoria