

29 August 2007

MEDIA RELEASE

Embargo - nil

Pre plant weed control for farm plantation establishment

For this year's farm forestry plantation, May is the time for controlling weeds before planting.

Weeds and grass kill newly established trees by competing for soil moisture and nutrients, therefore it is important to control these grasses and weeds before the trees are planted.

At this stage, the site should already be ripped and mounded. Following pre plant weed control, the mounds and up to 50cm either side should be free of weeds and grass.

Weeds can be controlled by physical disturbance using a rotary hoe on the mounds, however the most effective method is using appropriately selected herbicides applied at the correct rate.

The simplest method is to use a spray boom attached to an ag bike or agricultural tractor and block off the nozzles that spray between the mounds. Two rows can usually be treated with one pass.

To achieve the most effective weed control it is best to use a knockdown herbicide mixed with a residual herbicide. The knockdown will kill any actively growing weeds, and the residual will kill weeds as they germinate for up to six months. The residual herbicide will not affect the trees as they will be planted down beneath the layer where the herbicide is located.

Pre plant weed control should be undertaken about 3 – 6 weeks before planting. It is important to control weeds well during this operation, as post planting weed control can be much more expensive and may not be as effective.

Correctly controlled weeds will give a new plantation the best chance for good survival and vigorous growth by making all the soil moisture and nutrients available to the tree.

Remember the three "W's" of successful tree and plantation establishment, weed control, weed control, weed control.

If you would like further free advice about plantation establishment or weed control, would like to see an example at a farm forestry demonstration site, or have any question relating to commercial forestry, contact Emily May at Gippsland Private Forestry on (03) 5153 2947, or visit www.gpf.com.au.

Gippsland Private Forestry provides free advice and assistance to private forest growers on all aspects of forestry, including plantation establishment, management, harvesting and marketing of forest products.

For next month, start thinking about "Planting".

For further information contact:

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