

MEDIA RELEASE

21 May 2007

NEW GATE PLATES SIGNAL MOVE TO MORE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE IN NORTH EAST

Almost thirty North East producers will soon receive new gate signs to highlight accreditation awarded by a national environmental management scheme (EMS).

EMS is a management tool that benefits business and the environment.

The producers were part of an Environmental Management Systems (EMS) pilot funded by the Australian Government and delivered in the Region by the North East Catchment Management Authority in partnership with DPI Rutherglen.

Following the pilot, each landholder has undertaken a comprehensive audit or 'health check' of their enterprise in order to reach 'Eucalyptus' accreditation awarded by Australian Landcare Management Systems (www.alms.org.au)

The landholders used a mix of paddock, paper and web based tools to review their operations and identify ways to improve environmental management on farm and across the Catchment.

Tallangatta beef producer, Peter Kirk, was one of the landholders who achieved accreditation through the project. He likens EMS to Quality Assurance for the farm environment.

"It's about planning and managing our farm in a way that reduces and minimises the impacts on the natural environment of those practices necessary for the successful operation of our agricultural enterprises," said Peter.

Land Stewardship Manager with the North East CMA, Chris Reid, said the organisation has made a long-term commitment to encouraging EMS in the Region because of the many ways it supports sustainable agriculture.

"EMS offers benefits for the environment, landholders and the CMA," said Chris.

"The pilot was designed to increase awareness of EMS across our Region by building the skills and knowledge of landholders."

EMS can also lead to improved monitoring of natural resources at a Catchment scale.

"It can also help Catchment Management Authorities to collect meaningful information about on-farm environmental activities that relate to resource condition. This data then informs decisions about on-ground works and funding that can make a long-term difference to the health of natural resources across the North East," concluded Chris.

▲ Media opportunity: Tony Gleeson from Australian Landcare Management Systems is visiting the North East CMA on Tuesday 22 May and will be available for interviews in Wodonga from 9am-10am. Chris Reid from the North East CMA will also be available for comment.

For more details or to arrange an interview, please contact:
o Mary-Anne Scully – Media & Communications Consultant

Tel: 0408 685 225