

Plain Language Statement: Interviews



Research project:

Maximising co-benefits of trees on farm

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Introduction

Thank you for your interest in participating in this research project. The following few pages will provide you with further information about the project, so that you can decide if you would like to take part in this research.

Please take the time to read this information carefully. You may ask questions about anything you do not understand or want to know more about.

Your participation is voluntary. If you do not wish to take part, you do not have to. If you begin participating, you can stop at any time.

What is this research about?

This research conducted by The University of Melbourne has been funded by Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA), the Tasmanian Climate Change Office, and the Victorian Department of Jobs, Precincts, and Regions (DJPR). The objective of the project is to determine the value proposition of trees on farm including co-benefits and tree planting designs that optimise benefits for different livestock production systems.

MLA is funding the project under their carbon neutral 2030 (CN:30) research program. MLA's plan to achieve the CN:30 target focuses on 4 key areas of work: greenhouse gas emissions avoidance, carbon storage on farm, integrated management systems, and industry leadership. This project addresses carbon storage on farm. Maximising co-benefits of trees on farm and having a solid understanding of the value trees provide farmers will improve decisions regarding planting trees on farm.

Findings from the interviews will be used to estimate the value of trees on farms using specific information on the characteristics of your farm, your farming system, and the tree configurations on your farm. We will also use answers to co-design a framework to ease decision making and implementation of tree planting on farm.

What will I be asked to do?

If you are 18 years or older, operating a livestock farm with an Estimated Value of Agricultural Operations of at least \$40,000, we would like you to take part in an in-depth interview with a researcher using an online conferencing platform (e.g. Zoom or

Skype) or potentially an in-person interview on your property. Before the interview we will send through several introductory questions and a request for data on your farm. The interview itself should take approximately 60-90 minutes. In the interview you will be asked about your biophysical and business characteristics of your farm, your farm management practices, details of the trees on your property and your experience planting and maintaining trees on your farm.

The interview will be recorded for reference. We will provide you the digital recording or transcript of the interview on request. These files will be stored on a University of Melbourne network drive that can only be accessed by the researchers named below.

What are the possible benefits of taking part in an interview?

By taking part in an interview, you will have an opportunity to provide your perspective to help us better understand the co-benefits farmers observe from planting trees, the factors that encourage tree planting, the disadvantages and risks associated with planting trees, and recommendations to ensure optimal outcomes when planting trees.

Having estimates of the total value of trees on farms including co-benefits will assist farmers make more informed decisions regarding planting trees on farm. The findings will also be used to develop guidelines on how to maximise co-benefits and minimise risks and will inform the design of a framework to assist with planning tree plantings on farm.

What are the possible risks?

Possible risks from participation in the interview are considered minimal. The most significant risk is inconvenience: we ask you to give your time for the interview. The interview will be arranged at a time that is convenient to you. Questions in the interview will not be of a sensitive or embarrassing nature and are not likely to cause you undue distress or discomfort. To protect your privacy your name will not be used when reporting the research findings. However, the details of your farming system and tree planting design will be published. Use of your farm name or other farm features that could be used to identify you will be based on your preference. However, given the limited number of farms with characteristics similar to yours (region, farm characteristics and management, planting design, etc) anonymity cannot be guaranteed. The confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations.

Do I have to take part?

No. Participation is voluntary. There are no consequences if you choose not to participate, and you are free to withdraw from participating up to a week following the interview without providing any explanation.

Will I hear about the results of this project?

A summary of the findings will be provided to you at the completion of the research. The de-identified information will be included in a database of co-benefit and disadvantage information available on the Primary Industries Climate Challenge Centre

website and a quality-checked version published in Figshare, for farmers and researchers to access. Results will be published in industry newsletters, peer-reviewed journals and presented at conferences.

What will happen to information about me?

The information you provide will be stored on a secure password protected University of Melbourne server for five years after publication or public release in accordance with the University of Melbourne's Code of Conduct for research. Only researchers directly involved with this research will have access to your information. However, the information you provide, without reference to you, may be used to support closely related research projects, primarily other projects in MLA's CN:30 research program. At the end of this period all digital files will be erased, and any physical files disposed of through the University confidential documents disposal system.

Who is funding this project?

This project is funded by Meat and Livestock Australia, the Tasmanian Climate Change Office and the Victorian Department of Jobs, Precincts, and Regions.

Who can I contact if I have any concerns about the project?

This research project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of The University of Melbourne. If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this research project, which you do not wish to discuss with the research team, you should contact the Manager, Human Research Ethics, Research Ethics and Integrity, University of Melbourne, VIC 3010. Tel: +61 3 8344 2073 or Email: HumanEthics-complaints@unimelb.edu.au. All complaints will be treated confidentially. In any correspondence, please provide the name of the research team or the name of the project (Trees on Farm: Maximising co-benefits of Trees on Farm/ Module 4 of the CN30 Pathways program) or ethics ID number (21594) of the research project.

Where can I get further information?

If you would like more information about the project, please contact the researchers:

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