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Farmers must seek forestry advice

The NSW Farmers' Association says all landholders and property managers who receive commercial returns from growing native trees on their property should seek advice under the new Private Native Forestry code.

NSW Farmers' Association Conservation and Resource Committee Chair Louise Burge says farmers need to understand what the new rules for harvesting are.

"If you have any thought of harvesting a tree to sell as timber from your property, be it a fence post, mill log, or anything in between, then you need to understand how the new rules affect your operations," Mrs Burge said.

On 1st August 2007 the Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) gazetted the Native Vegetation Amendment (Private Native Forestry) Regulation 2007. As a result all forestry operations on private property in NSW must now be covered by a Private Native Forestry Property Vegetation Plan (PVP).

"There are four separate codes for private native forestry operation and each code has a different commencement date. However, landholders need to be aware that implementation arrangements vary across the State and may depend on whether operations are new or existing," Mrs Burge said.

As of the start of this month, all new operations require a PVP, however new conditions may apply even for existing operations.

"Restrictions imposed by the PNF codes will vary property by property. Farmers with riparian areas, old growth, rainforest and listed threatened species will be the most affected, however costly new road conditions will also have an impact," Mrs Burge said.

"The Government has refused to allow a social & economic impact analysis of the new regulations, however they have allocated \$29 million to timber mills and workers in relation to proposed changes.

"Farmers, who own the trees may only apply for a percentage of a much smaller package, which is simply a re-announcement from a previous funding commitment allocated for Native Vegetation restrictions," Mrs Burge concluded.

DECC is due to hold information "Open Office" sessions in August, where landholders can arrange an appointment to receive an "information kit" and discuss the issues of this private native forestry regulation. For more information go to www.environment.nsw.gov.au/pnf.

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Fast fact: 92% of farmers have environmental programs