

Media release

Marlborough's Paul Millen reaps award for Sector Engagement at National Conference

Marlborough man Paul Millen, Project Manager, NZ Dryland Forest Initiative won the 2018 FOREST GROWERS RESEARCH AWARD for **Communication and Sector Engagement** at the Forest Growers Research Conference in Tauranga.

The Forest Growers Research Awards have been awarded each year since 2011 to recognise outstanding achievements in forest growing research.

“Being recognised with this award is only possible because of the positive interest and support given by many in the forest industry to NZ Dryland Forest Initiative (NZDFI’s) programme. Also their willingness to engage in learning from our research and to collaborate with our development of durable eucalypt species that will diversify regional forestry land use, sequester carbon and supply future hardwood timber processing,” says Millen.

“The One Billion Trees programme is a huge opportunity for us, and I’m really excited about what the future holds for the NZ Dryland Forests Initiative. We have big plans,” Millen says.

The Marlborough Research Centre (MRC) has a long association with this incredibly successful programme. Over 10 years ago MRC committed start-up funding to undertake trial work for the selection of suitable durable eucalypt hardwoods to be used for vineyard posts, horticulture trellising, and a multitude of structural and decorative uses.

“This award is well deserved and acknowledges the tremendous commitment and leadership that Paul has consistently shown fronting the NZDFI programme”, says MRC CE Gerald Hope.

Quality science is a foundation of the forest industry and began 100 years ago with the first experimental plantings of introduced species for commercial wood production to replace New Zealand’s dwindling resource of native timbers.

Research Award for Communication and Sector Engagement

Paul Millen from the Drylands Forest Initiative (NZDFI) is the recipient of this award in 2018. NZDFI is a public/private research venture established 10 years ago between the University of Canterbury, Proseed, the Marlborough Research Centre and a number of vineyard and powerline companies.

The Drylands Forest Initiative was formed to promote the growing of durable eucalypt species in the dry east coast regions of the North and South Islands. The primary objective is growing naturally durable hardwood posts and timbers for vineyards which are experiencing issues with CCA treated radiata posts, and power line companies that have difficulty sourcing durable hardwood material from traditional overseas sources.

Paul has been responsible for sector engagement with a wide range of parties from land owners, farmers, regional councils, members of FOA and FFA and is regularly involved in extension activities with these groups. With the government's One Billion Trees programme Te Uru Rakau has been added to this list.

As a result of this enthusiasm the work of the Drylands Forest Initiative, and the potential for growing alternative species for high value niche markets, has a high profile. Seed has been sourced from overseas. Almost 100ha of trial plantings have been established for screening. There is a supporting research programme screening for durability, growth and insect browsing tolerance.

See a feature on Paul's work with dryland eucalypts in Episode 6 of *Forest Call*;

<http://nzfoa.org.nz/news/forest-call-series-on-facetv>

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