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Carbon forests being included in an Emissions Trading Scheme

The week's debates in the Senate about the veracity of 'carbon' forests being included in an Emissions Trading Scheme, as tax deductions and carbon credits are based on two ideas: that Managed Investment Schemes are good and that RFA's are sustainable.

MIS have produced a huge glut of hardwood timber, grown for the woodchip market. This is ready to harvest yet competes against native forests woodchips sold below cost by State forestry departments. Despite this glut, NAFI and CMFEU have successfully promoted the inclusion of plantations and planted forests as "carbon forests" to Senator Wong and Malcolm Turnbull with only the Nationals and the Greens seeing the obvious downsides.

Plantations are best for industry and native forests are best for carbon. Establishment emissions mostly out weigh carbon uptakes, according to experienced European scientists yet under Kyoto, are counted as zero as are the Australia's 7% of emissions from logging native forests.

Not only does this legislation mean less food farming and more tax farming, i.e., by the mining and energy industries, it fails to recognise native forests status as the best land based carbon banks as do RFA's.

The south east forests are being over logged and are degraded mainly for woodchips and recently for bio-energy, under inadequate state supervision yet science shows if we stopped logging and land clearing we can quickly, cheaply and best cut emissions by 24%.

This 'Carbon forest' legislation will produce unintended consequences for food production and for native forests; remember what  followed the Kyoto ETS when rain forests were cleared for palm oil plantations.