

Media Release

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Farm forestry was ‘a saving grace’ during the drought for Australia’s *Farmer of the Year*

Australia’s forest industries have congratulated newly crowned *Farmer of the Year* Michael Taylor and welcomed his comments heralding farm forestry as a ‘saving grace’ during three droughts on his property in the NSW New England district.

Michael, a sixth-generation wool farmer who farms with his wife Milly and parents, has picked up this year’s prestigious award which was established by ABC Rural and the Kondinin Group in 2010.

Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) Ross Hampton said, “It is great to hear that Michael Taylor, voted a truly outstanding Australian farmer, has had such a positive experience with production trees on his property. We need more farmers like Michael, who is following in the lead set by his parents. On this farm they have added trees as a supplementary income stream. Not only is this great for the farm books but helps in our urgent goal to provide vitally needed timber for our nation and assist with our national climate targets.”

Michael told the ABC, “Trees have definitely been one of the big alternative enterprises on this farm.”

Michael and his family have planted more than 200,000 trees since the 1980s. Some for biodiversity and some specifically for production. The family even installed a modest sawmill fifteen years ago.

Michael told the [ABC](#) that pine trees he planted just 14 years ago were now four to five hundred millimetres in diameter, “It’s just mind-blowing how quickly you can grow big logs,” he said.

“I hope the spotlight on Michael and his family operations through the *2022 Farmer of the Year* award will inspire and encourage other farmers and landholders to include farm forestry as a part of their enterprises,” Ross Hampton concluded.

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