

# Ecofarm

**I live on a few acres of treeless, ex-cattle farming land and I intend to plant enough trees to replace the ones that were cut down to build my house. I also want to plant enough trees to compensate for the CO<sub>2</sub> created in producing the electricity I use. How many trees growing, say, 15 metres tall, do I need to plant per kilowatt-hour?**

I was confronted with a similar problem five years ago when getting married in New Zealand. A friend flew from Germany for the ceremony, releasing about three years' worth of each person's total carbon emission quota during his jumbo jet journey, if we allow every human the same emission at present day levels. And, of course, to stabilise the climate, emissions need to be reduced by between 60 and 80 per cent.

We decided to plant some trees on my brother-in-law's land near Christchurch to soak up this carbon, as the wedding was meant to be a celebration of life and the future, not a burden on it.

The carbon content of a tree depends on its diameter and height, the density of the wood and its water content, but a typical tree of 50 centimetres diameter and 15 metres height would weigh about 1.5 tonnes, 20 per cent of which is carbon. Ten such trees would thus make up for the flight. Among others, we planted some huge native Kauri trees. We hear that they are growing well, but it will take them at least 100 years to recover the necessary carbon from the atmosphere.