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2009 Western Catchment Carbon Cocky Competition - are you feeling cocky??

The prestigious title of Western Catchment Carbon Cocky of the Year is now up for grabs and the call is now out for Western Catchment 'Carbon Farmers' to nominate themselves.

The winner of the 2009 Western Catchment Carbon Cocky Competition will receive \$500 and travel, accommodation and registration fees to the Carbon Farming Expo and Conference 2009 to be held in Orange on November 4 and 5, where the NSW Champion will be announced.

The Western Catchment Management Authority (CMA) Rangeland Rehabilitation Officer, Chris Higgins, says the competition supports Western Catchment landholders who are demonstrating best practice in sequestering carbon into the soil.

"People interested in nominating themselves should contact me on 1800 032 101. Nomination forms are available on our website www.western.cma.nsw.gov.au and need to be submitted by October 9," Mr Higgins said.

The competition assesses three land management principles to judge whether farm soil carbon levels are increasing.

Experience and scientific research in other areas of Australia has shown these three management principles increase carbon levels in the soil.

These are:

1. Maximising groundcover and biomass production.
2. Increasing plant root depth (with perennials or healthier crops).
3. Reducing cultivation (ploughing) and compaction to a minimum when cropping or sowing pastures.

Additional points will also be given for landholders who use renewable energy sources and other innovative ways of reducing their greenhouse gas emissions or increasing the storage of carbon on their farms.

"Landholders who can demonstrate these farming practices and have a farm plan should lodge an application," Mr Higgins said.

Last year, the Mosely family of Etiwanda and Manuka Stations near Cobar won the inaugural Western CMA Carbon Cocky competition and went on to win the NSW Western Plains Carbon Cocky of the Year 2008-2009.

Stuart and Nancy Mosely, son Andrew and daughter-in-law Megan use a combination of carbon-friendly practices on the 26,670 hectares they manage south of Cobar.



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These include managing invasive native scrub, erecting total grazing pressure fencing on 14,000 hectares, rotational grazing with at least 150 day rest periods and conservation farming techniques such as pasture cropping.

"The awards provide an opportunity to be acknowledged and rewarded for positive farming practices," Mr Higgins said.

"If you are currently farming with carbon friendly practices I'd encourage you to put your hand up," he said.

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Caption: Western CMA Rangeland Rehabilitation Officer Chris Higgins with Stuart Mosely, whose family won the title of Western Plains Carbon Cockey 2008-2009.

