



Rodney decision evens playing field



Photo: Anuradha Dissenyake, Flickr



Farm and forest in harmony, Leigh, Rodney District
Rural zones are productive areas used for business activities related to primary production says the local district plan

A CHALLENGE TO THE STATUS OF FORESTRY AS A PERMITTED RURAL LAND USE HAS BEEN DEFEATED IN THE ENVIRONMENT COURT.

The Court's ruling on an appeal by the Environmental Defence Society (EDS) against aspects of the proposed Rodney district plan has been welcomed by forest owners.

FOA president Peter Berg, who was also a witness in the case, says it confirms that forestry, as a sustainable rural industry, should not be singled out in district and regional plans for more onerous treatment than other land uses.

"In essence the EDS, with support from the Auckland Regional Council, was endeavouring to make it difficult for forestry in a rural area where it is an optimal land-use. It wasn't based on anything to do with sustainability – they simply seemed to have an ideological bee in their bonnet about plantation forestry."

If the appeal had succeeded, land owners would have had to apply for resource consents or submitted management plans before planting plantations larger than 10 hectares in the district's landscape protection rural (LPR) and east coast rural (ECR) sub-zones.

Taumata Plantations Limited representing the forest industry, Rodney District Council, the EDS and other parties to the case are now, at the direction of the Court, discussing minor rule changes. These cover forestry set-backs from permanent water courses, public roads and property boundaries, which were omitted from the draft plan. If they fail to agree, the parties will go back to the Court for a final ruling.

Apart from these changes, the Court under Judge Jeff Smith dismissed the appeal, saying that farming and forestry are part of the normal rural character and need to be protected and enabled in the rural zone.

In Rodney, all rural land-uses

including forestry are subject to environmental protection rules governing earthworks, vegetation removal and modification of water courses. In the LPR and ECR sub-zones these rules are more restrictive than they are in the rural zone generally.

Rural zones are defined in the Rodney District plan as "productive areas used for business activities related to primary production". The rules governing these activities allow for land-use intensification and change even in the sub-zones.

The centre plank of the EDS appeal was the argument that plantation forestry had a more negative visual impact than other rural activities. The greater the area, the bigger the impact.

This argument was rejected by the Court, which noted that where exotic forest is planted alongside native, the colours of the two largely blend in together. This contrasts with areas of pasture, "which show as a brighter green against the darker vegetation", and shelterbelts which privatise areas and structures.

"We agree that forestry can have significant short-term visual effects when an entire area is cleared, however it appeared to us that the vegetation cover was quick to recover where trees were not replanted.

"On the edge of existing forestry areas ... quick growing natives such as manuka and kanuka [soften] the entire appearance of plantation forestry. The court noticed the stark contrast of lowland swampy areas with drains and fencing, next to plantation forestry with native vegetation on its edge. We concluded that forestry in those circumstances had less impact than ... farming."

The EDS proposal to impose restrictions on forests of more than 10 ha was described by the Court as curious. "Smaller plantations, sometimes referred to as pocket handkerchiefs within pasture land, have more visual effect than the larger areas which cover an entire hillside or ridge."

Gill Chappell, counsel for Taumata Plantations Limited, says the appeal has been something of a test case.

"The Court was unequivocal about the visual impact of forestry relative to

... continued next page

IN THIS ISSUE

DEMAND UNPREDICTABLE, BUT GOOD | 2

UNCERTAINTY CLOUDS CARBON FORESTRY | 3

POWER PYLONS SHOW-DOWN? | 4

DRUG-FREE ZONE HEADS SKYWARD | 5

ILLEGAL LOGGING COP-OUT | 6

FIDA FUNDS WAIARIKI UPGRADE | 7

BUG-FREE LIGHTS, ECO-FRIENDLY EXPORTS | 8

NESSIE TO EMERGE FROM LOCH | 8



Demand unpredictable, but doesn't it feel good?



By FOA
chief executive
David Rhodes

THE DIFFICULTY OF PREDICTING FUTURE DEMAND FOR A COMMODITY WAS HIGHLIGHTED BY THE DISASTROUS CHILEAN EARTHQUAKE.

In one long minute it knocked out timber and pulp mills, while simultaneously creating a massive demand for construction materials for the rebuilding of Chilean infrastructure. It also removed for up to a year a major supplier from North American and Asian wood products markets and triggered a sharp price hike for those products.

Changes in market dynamics are normally much less sudden than this. But even gradual changes can have a huge cumulative impact. For example, while the western world has been focused on worrying economic trends in North America and Europe, economic growth has been continuing virtually unabated in China, India and elsewhere in Asia, and with it, demand for our logs and lumber. Particularly logs.

We may decry the value-added opportunity lost but, for forest growers, having your interests spread is currently paying dividends.

The ASEAN, Australia and New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA) took effect on 1 January. Since ASEAN and New Zealand also have FTAs with China, this now makes us part of the world's biggest free trade zone.

The long-term benefits cannot be over-stated. In China alone, the construction industry has been growing at an average of 20% a year and it is predicted that nearly 40 billion square metres of floor space, or around 35,000 new skyscrapers, will be built in the next 20 years.

Russia is China's biggest supplier of logs. But its on-again off-again log

export tariffs have damaged its credibility with both log buyers and processing investors.

Beetle-damaged Canadian lumber has been a short-term fix, but this supply is finite. Also some Canadian forest listed as potentially harvestable is in fact uneconomic, just as it is in Russia. In addition, some traditional South-east Asia sources of supply will dry up within the next five-10 years.



Photo: Pablo Ordenes, Flickr

El terremoto at work in Chile
Other, less dramatic, forces are also driving big changes in world markets

In their search for reliable supplies Chinese buyers have increasingly turned to New Zealand. As a result, our share of China's log market has climbed from 5% to 27% in the last three years while the Russian share has gone down from 91% to 68%.

Noting this, the China Timber Distribution Association is organising a seminar at which the FOA will explain expected NZ supply trends and describe how to use NZ radiata.

Meanwhile the first negotiations

between India and New Zealand on a bilateral FTA are underway. India is New Zealand's fifth-largest market for wood products and the source of 80% of India's log supply.

Wood processing is one of the fastest growing sectors in the rapidly growing Indian economy and its importance to New Zealand will increase. So far, logs have made up the bulk of our forest exports to India, but as Lockwood homes have already demonstrated, there is clearly a potential for processed products.

New technologies and changing political priorities provide yet more potential.

By early 2009, at least 73 countries, 29 American states and nine Canadian provinces had developed renewable energy targets. These have contributed to a growing interest in wood pellets and second-generation biofuels derived from cellulose.

As noted in the last *Bulletin*, Canada's export wood pellet trade with Europe went from zero to 1.2 m tonnes in three years. In North America, the interest in non-fossil fuels is growing and if, as expected, this is reflected in US energy policies, Canada's pellet supply will increasingly be used nearer home.

Some of the European appetite will need to be satisfied by supply from elsewhere including Australasia although markets in our own backyard, such as Japan, will likely be a more important destination.

The rapid expansion in global trade of biomass (both wood chips and pellets) should continue in the medium-term as more countries favour renewable energy and as local, relatively inexpensive, supplies of biomass reach their limits. The impact on New Zealand forest owners? Well, we don't know, but it has already led to new investment and can only be positive.

Which is why the FOA has been working with the Bioenergy Association of New Zealand to develop a draft bio-energy policy framework for government consideration. Because there are multiple benefits associated with renewable forest-based energy production, the industry and government need to build on the fledgling efforts to date, such as through EECA, and facilitate a greater level of domestic uptake rather than simply feeding international demand.

From previous page

other rural land uses and recognised that the landscape zones in question were productive working environments.

"The decision is very positive for forestry interests and will doubtless be cited by counsel representing forest owners if a similar case emerges in the future. Hopefully it will also deter councils or lobby groups from proposing rules that unfairly target forestry."

The decision of the Court (A117-2009) can be downloaded from the FOA website, www.nzfoa.org.nz



Short-term uncertainty clouds long-term prospects

UNCERTAINTY IS RIFE IN NEW ZEALAND'S EMBRYONIC CARBON MARKET, BUT LONG-TERM PROSPECTS FOR CARBON FORESTRY LOOK GOOD.

Forest nurseries say there has been interest from investors looking at planting carbon forests in each of the last three years. But sales are few and some of those who have placed orders for seedlings have defaulted.

Wei-Young Wang, PF Olsen's seed orchard manager, says a carbon forestry promoter last year lost his substantial deposit when he failed to complete a purchase. More recently CO2 Farming, a business that was planning to set up carbon forests in the North Island, has collapsed.

Nigel Brunel, carbon trader for OMFfinancial (OMF), the company that has brokered the sale of large tranches of credits for forest owners, says uncertainty among buyers and sellers is understandable, but isn't justified by the facts.

"Sure, the deniers have been winning the battle of the headlines, the recession is reducing demand and the Copenhagen summit failed to agree on a binding treaty to replace Kyoto.

"But one thing hasn't changed – the acceptance among nearly all mainstream political parties around the world that human-induced climate change is real."

For owners of Kyoto forests wanting to sell credits, the continuing deep recession in Europe and the very limited exposure of NZ emitters are keeping a blanket on buyer demand. The Euro-

pean carbon price is around Euro 12 a tonne for secondary CERs, about half the market peak reached in July 2008.

Weak prices and uncertainty have led some to conclude that the government will abandon the ETS altogether. David Rhodes says this is unlikely.

Gov't should help

FOA chief executive David Rhodes says the government should be reducing some of the uncertainty and risk associated with carbon forestry.

"In the run-up to the Copenhagen talks, we proposed to the government that it should run two self-funded schemes – one insuring carbon foresters against force majeure risks and another providing them with an averaged income from carbon sales from the day they planted their forest.

"At the time, officials said they had bigger fish to fry. Perhaps it's now time for these schemes to be actioned."

Because of the uncertainty about the approach that will be taken by the US and Australia, New Zealand's emitting industries have been given a transition period in which to adjust to the ETS. While this is understandable, it would send the world and our international

consumers a very unfortunate message if the country which calls itself *100% Pure*, walked away from the ETS.

"We may not see a tightening of obligations until our trading partners make comparable moves, but the intensity-based requirements from July onwards are relatively modest obligations," he says.

Some 200 nations have now signed the Copenhagen Accord. While this document is not legally binding, it does provide a common point of comparison for all countries and a global measure of progress.

Also, signatory countries face immense moral and political pressure to act. Even India and China, which were adamant in their refusal to accept binding reduction targets in Copenhagen, are having to deal with energetic grassroots environmental movements at home.

The LULUCF (land use, land use change and forestry) rules, which are the basis of the anomalies in the Kyoto Protocol that concern forest owners, will be further refined at the next round of UN Climate Change talks in November, with further negotiations likely to continue well on into 2011. The refined rules will apply to any legally binding arrangement that replaces Kyoto, or whatever comes out of the Copenhagen Accord.

At some point soon the domestic market is likely to start to solidify. In the meantime, Brunel counsels potential buyers and sellers not to rush into the market. For owners of Kyoto forests that will be replanted following harvest, selling one-third of the carbon sequestered in a given year, would be prudent and also provide a good income.

"Longer term it's a massive opportunity. Carbon trading has been happening in Europe for the best part of this decade and after going through a few teething problems it has been very successful. There was \$US150 billion in trades last year – it's huge."

For now, the biggest carbon forester appears to be the government. In the 2009/10 year, the Afforestation Grant Scheme is funding 4032 ha of new forests, 2718 ha of which are high sequestration exotic species. The balance are low sequestration indigenous species, either planted or left to revert. In addition, 2400 ha are being afforested – mostly with exotic species – as part of the East Coast Project.



A climate change rally in India

World-wide, climate change is still seen as the biggest challenge facing the planet



Help me, Sparky

Minister may be forced to step in to level the playing field

LAND OWNERS WHO DON'T HAVE EASEMENT AGREEMENTS WITH POWER LINES COMPANIES RISK HUGE POTENTIAL LIABILITIES IF AN INCIDENT ON THEIR LAND LEADS TO A MAJOR POWER OUTAGE.

As a Waikato farm shelter belt fire in January and a Marlborough forest fire in February showed, the risk is ever-present. The Waikato fire knocked out the power to more than 50,000 homes and businesses and some industrial areas of Auckland. The Marlborough fire resulted in the Cook Strait cable being shut down.

Transpower isn't understood to be seeking compensation in either case. But in theory it could have sued the land owners for its costs and those of its customers.

The unwillingness of successive governments to legislate fair access, compensation and liability rules for power lines crossing private land has long been a bone of contention. Politicians of all hues steer away from the issue because fair access rules would increase costs to lines companies, which would eventually be passed on to consumers.

National did not address the issue in its 2008 election policies and the government it leads has not commented publicly on the issue since it took office.

Faced with government inaction, the Forest Owners Association has lobbied Transpower to adopt a template agreement finalised in 2006. This provides for forest owners to be compensated for loss of production arising from new or upgraded power lines, clarifies access arrangements, and makes the power company responsible for vegetation and pest control in transmission corridors, as well as for the costs arising from any outages.

Five years on, chief executive David Rhodes recommends this agreement to forest owners as a sound basis for negotiation. He says a number of forest owners have negotiated easement agreements. While their terms are confidential, he assumes the template was the starting point.

About 12,000 kilometres of transmission lines link power stations with local energy utilities throughout New

Zealand. Most of the transmission towers and lines are on, or pass over, private property.

In the absence of an easement agreement the legal status of these lines and towers is governed by the Electricity Act 1992. This gives the power company the right to access, maintain and operate any lines that were in existence in 1988 – about 95% of the national grid. But they do have to pay compensation “for all loss, injury, or damage” suffered by the land owner when replacing or upgrading the lines.



Photo: Sandy Austin, Flickr

It's time to stop the subsidies paid by forest owners to power companies

When these lines were originally installed, no compensation was paid to land owners. Yet the potential liability for contributing to an outage continues to grow, as does the opportunity cost of being unable to use the land to its full productive use.

The lever for addressing these injustices had been the Transpower decision to upgrade the national grid. While

some lines will be replaced and rerouted, other lines will follow the same routes, use the same pylons, but have greatly increased load bearing capacity.

In essence, if an upgrade has what the Electricity Act calls an ‘injurious affect’ on the land, Transpower or the lines company is required to negotiate an easement from the land owner. Compensation is based on the difference between the value of the property assessed before and after registration of the easement, using a formula defined in the Public Works Act.

This can be easily calculated in terms of the number of forest trees that can't be planted, or the area on a farm that can't be irrigated. Not directly addressed in the Electricity Act and less easily calculated is the potential liability the land owner faces if say a forest fire or a wayward bulldozer knocks out the national grid.

The Federated Farmers campaign has focussed on getting an annual payment for loss of productive potential of land crossed by power lines. For forest owners, the focus has been on indemnifying the land owner for incidents, the management of vegetation and pests within and along the margins of an easement corridor, and access to transmission lines and towers.

Attempts to get Transpower to negotiate have had a checkered history. In 2004, after being rebuffed for years, the FOA welcomed a commitment by Transpower, under then chief executive Ralph Craven, to negotiate a template agreement with land owners. Transpower also published a 15-point *Commitment to Landowners and Communities*.

This proved to be a false start. In 2006, Transpower withdrew from negotiations and later removed the commitment from its website. Individual land owners were left to negotiate with Transpower and lines companies as best they could.

“These are unequal contests. Land owners can't accurately predict how

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Drug-free zone extends skyward

PILOTS AND GROUND CREWS SPREADING 1080 POISON BAITS AND APPLYING OTHER AGRICHEMICALS TO FORESTS MAY HAVE TO COMPLY WITH THE FOA'S DRUG AND ALCOHOL CODE.

The FOA is negotiating an agreement with the Animal Health Board (TB-free NZ) covering aerial 1080 and other pest control operations on forestry land. It has also advised the NZ Agricultural Aviation Industry Association that it will be seeking similar drug and alcohol provisions in agreements with other aerial operators.

The AHB agreement is intended to cover all major health, safety and risk scenarios that could apply to anyone operating in a commercial forest. Contractors must have public liability and fire insurance. No-fly buffer zones will apply 200 metres either side of Transpower line corridors.

The drug and alcohol provisions cover anyone doing safety-sensitive work for the AHB or its contractors on a forest owner's land. This includes the application of vertebrate toxins, driving vehicles on forest roads, or working in or around fixed wing aircraft or helicopters.

"Land owners and managers have a legal obligation to take all practicable steps to provide a safe workplace. To this end, the FOA Drug And Alcohol Code has been approved by the Department of Labour and was endorsed by the previous minister of forestry," says the FOA's Peter Weir.



Photo: Geoff Woodhouse, DoC



If the drop is on a forest owner's land, the ground crew may need to comply with a drug and alcohol policy

"We expect all contractors undertaking safety sensitive work on members' lands to have robust drug and alcohol screening & testing procedures that are aligned with our Code. This already applies to harvesting, trucking and silvicultural contractors. It's now time

to include everyone else who might be working in our forests."

FSC and trophy compliant

The agreement being negotiated between the FOA and the Animal Health Board is based on one drafted by Hancock Forests – New Zealand's largest forest owner.

One of the major challenges, says FOA environment committee chair Peter Weir, has been to come up with a template that is flexible enough to cope with the requirements of all forest owners.

"Some welcome aerial 1080. Others don't want a bar of it. Others want deer repellent added so that recreational or trophy hunting is not threatened," he says.

"Large areas of forest are eco-certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). While the owners of these forests recognise that the AHB's powers under the Biosecurity Act over-ride FSC rules, they need the AHB to apply on their behalf to the FSC for an emergency derogation to apply 1080, so that their certification is not put at risk."

From previous page

much disruption or economic loss a corridor will cause. The lines companies ultimately have the power of compulsory purchase and because they insist on strict confidentiality clauses, land owners can only guess at the levels of compensation negotiated by others," says Rhodes.

This confidentiality was criticised in a November 2009 study by the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research (NZIER) for Federated Farmers. It found that transmission lines cost forest owners more than \$2000 per structure per year in extra weed, pest control and insurance costs.

The NZIER suggested that Transpower should release information about the levels of compensation payable on different types of land in ways that do not breach the privacy of individual set-

tlements or unnecessarily raise expectations. This would remove much of the uncertainty from negotiations and help redress the imbalance of power.

"The FOA endorses this suggestion," says Rhodes. "We don't know what individual land owners have agreed with Transpower but, if we did, we would almost certainly find examples of easement agreements that fail to fairly compensate land owners."

In recent weeks Transpower executives have met with the FOA without showing any enthusiasm for endorsing the template agreement that they backed away from five years ago. However, their willingness to resume talks is a small step forward.

In the meantime, forest owners are strongly advised to use any lines company activity on their land as an oppor-

tunity to negotiate easement agreements covering all existing, upgraded and new electricity infrastructure on their land. Any agreement should be based on the template on the FOA website.

Ultimately, if Transpower is unwilling to allow land owners to negotiate on a fairer basis, the government may be forced to legislate. In its 2008 briefing to the incoming minister, the Ministry of Energy advised that the Electricity Act might need to be amended to clarify lines companies' access rights to existing infrastructure.

The government may not want to open what it sees as a can of worms. But equally it cannot afford to have the energy supply to New Zealand's largest city being knocked out because a sense of grievance and injustice is leading to a growing number of disputes between lines companies and land owners.



Action needed on 'unsavoury' business

FOREST OWNERS AND WOOD PROCESSORS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE TASMAN ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE FAILURE OF THEIR GOVERNMENTS TO DO ANYTHING MEANINGFUL TO STOP THE IMPORT OR SALE OF PRODUCTS FROM ILLEGALLY LOGGED FORESTS.



Environmental destruction in PNG

The Australian and NZ Governments lecture Japan about whaling, while allowing wood from illegally logged forests to be sold at home

In Australia, the government – after years of rumination – has come up with a regulatory impact statement (RIS) that advises a softly softly approach. In other words, no regulations at home and continued low priority talks overseas.

The New Zealand Government is humming the same tune. Indeed, it has gone one further, reversing the previous government's decision to require retailers to ensure that any kwila they sold came from legally logged forests and to label it accordingly.

Kwila is a Southeast Asian/Pacific Islands tropical hardwood tree. It was targeted because it makes up about 80 per cent of illegally-sourced timber imported into New Zealand.

"Forest owners see mandatory labelling of kwila as a practical first step. Its replacement with unfunded support for voluntarily labelling and a decision to keep addressing the issue in international forums is very disappointing," FOA chief executive David Rhodes says.

Illegal logging in developing countries is an unsavoury business, often

involving corruption, armed thugs forcing indigenous people from their homes and environmental destruction. The resulting timber is then sold into international markets at low prices, undercutting wood from forests managed in a socially and environmentally responsible way.

A study by Scion, released three years ago, estimated that the supply of illegal wood in world markets cost NZ forest owners \$41 million a year, sawmillers \$22 million, and the panel, pulp and paper industries \$203 million. Because of the trade, New Zealand export log prices are 10.6% lower than they would otherwise be.

Lower returns mean forestry is less viable as a land-use, resulting in fewer plantings and less carbon storage. Individual investors, the economy and the environment all miss out.

"It appears that the Australian and New Zealand Governments fear other countries would be offended if they implemented restrictions," says Rhodes. "Yet this is a cause where leadership

should be demonstrated. Only those who have something to lose are likely to be offended.

"The United States has recently included forest products in the Lacey Act, a law which is designed to stop the trade in endangered species. This makes it illegal to import forest products into the United States that do not meet the legal requirements of the country of origin.

"Indonesia or the Solomons could hardly object if we did the same – we would simply be requiring our importers to demonstrate they were complying with their own laws."

Voluntary partnership agreements (VPAs) being negotiated by the EU with wood producing countries in Africa and Asia are another model. They are WTO-compliant and designed to assist the producing country to manage its forests sustainably and to set up systems that verify its exports are legal.

A3P, which represents Australia's plantation-based wood products and paper manufacturing industry, favours this sort of approach. It says it needs to be backed by measures that require importers (and domestic producers) to assess the legality of the forest products they sell. Government involvement is needed to ensure that all stakeholders comply.

Late last year a Bill to ban illegal and unsustainable timber imports was introduced to the NZ parliament by Green MP Catherine Delahunty. Despite a request from the forest industry for the government to vote in favour of the Bill at its first reading, it was voted down.

In Australia, the government RIS has argued that any action would be futile because Australia is such a minor part of world trade in wood and paper products. A3P describes this argument as "spurious", likening it to other moral issues where Australia demands a voice, even though it is not a major player. Whaling is a good example.

Rhodes says plantation forestry is one of New Zealand's most environmentally responsible industries. Also, our government strictly enforces laws relating to the sustainable harvest of logs from native forests. Yet the industry's reputation is unfairly sullied by illegal logging.

He says consumers should ask retailers to provide evidence that decking

timber, outdoor furniture and other forest products, like fire logs, come from legal sources before they buy. Greenpeace has also produced a *Guide to Forest Friendly Outdoor Furniture Retailers* that rates the commitment of retailers to the sourcing of furniture

from sustainable sources.

Importers and retailers can also make use of the *Sustainable Procurement of Wood and Paper-based Products Guide and Resource Kit* recently produced by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development.

In addition, the WBCSD in association with PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) has developed a *Sustainable Forest Finance Toolkit* to support businesses involved in financing forest-based industries, especially in developing countries.

TRAINING

FIDA funds Waiariki upgrade

THE FORESTRY AND WOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES WILL SOON BENEFIT FROM IMPROVED FACILITIES AT THE WAIARIKI INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY IN ROTORUA.

The new gasifier, quality control laboratory and mechanised harvesting simulators are the last projects financed by the previous government's Forest Industry Development Agenda which was jointly funded by government and the forest industry.

Institute spokesperson Jonathon Hagger says the new facilities will boost vocational training, teaching and research resources at the institute's School of Forestry, Wood Processing and Biotechnology.

The gasifier will be attached to the existing boiler at the Waipa campus and will be fed with sawmill wood waste. Jointly funded by FIDA and EECA, it will enable new courses to be developed in gasification, bio-energy and boiler operation. It will also be made available for research by industry partners.

This winter, construction of a laboratory will begin at Waipa for teaching wood quality control. Initially it will focus on timber gluing and strength testing, but with provi-

sion for expansion as demand for new courses grows. These may include sonic log and timber testing, wood chip quality, structural timber strength and stiffness, as well as wood component manufacturing.

Two different types of simulation software are being purchased.

The USNR Mill Expert will enable the Waiariki sawmill to be optimised for production efficiency and teaching. The John Deere harvester/forwarder simulator, which simulates mobile mechanical harvesting, will be transportable – allowing it to be located at remote training sites, schools and events. It will provide hands-on training for both new and experienced operators.

Established in 1978, Waiariki has a student population of around 9000 full- and part-time students, making it one of the largest tertiary institutes outside the university centres. Originally developed as a centre for adult and trades education, it has offered bachelor degree programmes since the early 1990s.

The institute's School of Forestry has strong links with Rotorua's forest industry and its forest management, forest operations, solid wood processing and biotechnology programmes are designed to provide the industry with job-ready graduates. The Diploma in Forest Management and short courses are taught primarily at the institute's Mokoia Campus, with timber machining and other wood processing courses taught at the Waipa Campus.

The Waiariki National Centre of Excellence for the Forest and Wood Industries is a partnership between Waiariki, FITEC and the University of Auckland. It supports all the forestry and wood manufacturing courses provided by Waiariki including the Diploma in Forest Management and the Diploma in Manufacturing. The centre is being outfitted with a specialist computer suite used to run state-of-the-art computer simulation software relating to forest mapping, forest operations, saw doctoring, machining and related applications.



The Waiariki National Centre of Excellence for the Forest and Wood Industry on the Mokoia site of the Waiariki Institute of Technology. Known locally as Te whare rakau (The Tree House), it is the home of the School of Forestry, Wood Processing and Biotechnology pellet manufacture using harvest wastes



Lights that don't say "eat me"

THE PORT OF TAURANGA HAS BEEN TRIALLING A NEW LIGHTING SYSTEM AT ITS MT MAUNGANUI SITE.



New yellow lights being trialled at Mt Maunganui
What wavelengths of yellow are least attractive to insects?

The aim is to reduce the risk of flying insects attacking sawn timber and logs destined for export. The trial, which ran for six weeks ending in late February, aimed to identify which wavelengths had the least attractant effect.

Scion project leader Steve Pawson says the white metal halide lights used at many wood processing facilities and ports attract large numbers of insects every night. In contrast, certain wavelengths in the yellow spectrum have little or no effect on insect behaviour.

"Ultimately we envisage the use of yellow lighting to reduce the attraction of mills and ports to most insects. These would be backed up, within the site, by highly attractive ultraviolet light traps to mop up bugs carted in on logs or attracted to the area by stimuli other than light," Dr Pawson says.

The purpose of the research is to find an environmentally-friendly way to reduce pest contamination of forest products, with the long-term aim of reducing the need for methyl bromide fumigation.

The pest of greatest concern to many markets is the burnt pine longhorn beetle, *Arhopalus ferus*. The beetle, which is native to Europe and northern Asia (except Japan), was accidentally introduced into New Zealand, probably in the mid-1950s. It does not occur in North America, India, Japan or anywhere in the southern hemisphere other than New Zealand.

The research has been funded by the MAF Sustainable Farming Fund with

co-funding from STIMBR (Stakeholders in Methyl Bromide Reduction), the FOA and the former government's FIDA

fund. It builds on previous research coordinated by Scion's Lindsay Bulman and co-funded by FIDA and the FOA.

Nessie prepares to emerge

A National Environment Standard (NES) for forestry is expected to emerge shortly from the Ministry for the Environment for public consultation.

"Without the commitment of environment minister Nick Smith to effective RMA reform this would not be happening," says FOA environmental committee chair Peter Weir.

"It follows more than a decade of successive governments failing to get the RMA back on track as enabling legislation and an equally long history of lobbying by forest owners frustrated by the huge variations in the way forestry is treated in district and regional plans."

Timberlands legal manager Trish Fordyce says forest owners forced a step change on themselves in 2007 when they committed themselves to complying with the rules in the FOA's Environmental Code of Practice.

"Now we are going a step change further and asking for those standards to be made law."

The FOA has consulted intensively with a core group of members, including those most likely to be impacted, on draft terms and conditions, acknowledging that these will raise the bar for some. The prize is certainty and lower RMA compliance costs for all, says Weir.

"If MfE accepts what the industry has put forward, they will have a standard that will be robust and defensible, and lead to tighter environmental performance across the sector."

Weir says the standard will encourage investment in forestry, but only in areas where it is an appropriate use of land.

"Forestry is the answer for many, but not all, environmental concerns. We are not seeking the right to plant on significant natural areas, outstanding landscapes, historical sites or on skeletal soils – in such areas councils should retain the right to make forestry a discretionary land-use."



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