A new Curriculum for University of Canterbury School of Forestry

After a short-lived flurry earlier in the century, the School of Forestry next commenced a serious intake of students in 1970. Its curriculum was carefully planned, after substantial sector consultation, and it lasted unchanged until 1982. In 1983 a modified version was introduced, redesigned following the 1981 Forestry Conference to increase the emphasis on forest engineering, processing and marketing. The new degree was barely into its stride however, with the first graduates under it completing their degrees in 1986, when the present restructuring of the forestry sector commenced.

The implications of Government's changes were quite significant for forestry education. Essentially, there was to be no future role for the 'generalist' forester who would work in both indigenous and plantation forestry. He or she was likely to work in one of these areas only. Educationally, that meant the present degree was no longer appropriate. If it could be restructured however, it offered the opportunity for a greater level of specialisation than in the past, something which the forest industry had sought, and which the conservation sector was seen to need.

A revised curriculum has been developed to take heed of the above changes. After circulating proposals widely round the sector toward the end of last year (no comments were received), it has gone through the university formalities and will commence in 1990. There is a core of subjects, some 40% of the degree, which must be taken by all students. Outside of that core, students may put together whatever mix of subjects they wish. It is expected, however, that most will seek a mix aimed either at optimising their career prospects as commercial foresters or as conservation managers.

There are implications in this for employers: from 1993 when the first graduates emerge under the new curriculum, it will be necessary to question prospective employees carefully about the content of their degree.

While still substantially teaching a science base, the first year of the new curriculum now contains one forestry subject. This does not necessitate the first year of the degree being taken at Canterbury, however. It can still be taken at any university, with the forestry course being picked up subsequently. Incidentally this course, Forestry and Societies, will be open to students taking other degrees and it is hoped it will increase interest in forestry.

The third year of the degree will be taught on the Lincoln University campus (Lincoln College becomes a university in January 1990). The decision to do this reflected the strength of Lincoln in applied economics, marketing and finance, as well as its strengths in resource management, soil science, soil and water engineering and recreation management. That third year will also allow joint teaching in agroforestry and resource-based recreation. In addition agricultural students will be able to take other courses with a forestry flavour.

The University of Canterbury School of Forestry believes its new Bachelor of Forestry Science degree to be of top quality by any standards. It would be ironic if, shortly after its introduction and with a commercial sector set for major expansion, the School was forced to close through lack of student numbers. On the basis of a very low intake during the last two years, this is possible unless student numbers increase. To facilitate that happening the School has developed new promotional material, developed after a survey of school leavers' knowledge and views of the forestry sector. That material has been distributed to every high school in the country. School of Forestry is also asking its past graduates to visit schools, display the material and promote forestry and conservation as careers. There are nearly 400 high schools in New Zealand which we would like to have visited. Please contact the School if you would like to offer your services.

G.B. Sweet

RADIATA PINE PROMOTION

New Zealand's major forestry companies, together with the Trade Development Board and the Ministry of Forestry, have joined forces in mounting a major promotion campaign for radiata pine.

The multi-language campaign is targeted at major markets in China, Japan, Korea and India, and the objective is a larger share of log and processed wood sales currently dominated by other species.

The Minister of External Relations and Trade, Hon. Mike Moore, has applauded the industry's initiative and endorsed the campaign on behalf of Government. He said the processing of New Zealand radiata pine has been developed into one of the world's most efficient and productive wood industries.

"The primary objective is to promote awareness of radiata pine's ability to perform well in a wide range of applications," said the Minister. "This in turn should lead to increased acceptance of the species as an alternative to the traditional wood supplies."

"Wood is a diminishing resource in most areas, and therefore New Zealand is one of the countries uniquely placed with its guaranteed availability of lumber and wood fibre." The campaign, he said, spells out the amazing versatility and the diverse applications of radiata pine, with its growing and processing in New Zealand tailored to meet specific market needs.

"It is now time to tell the world about this resource, its availability and its versatility," said the Minister.

The international promotion has involved the production of 350,000 individual printed items including an overview brochure, a series of pamphlets about processing radiata pine, video presentations, seminars and technology exchanges in the various target countries.

Late last year a group of the country's major wood exporters agreed to mount a