News from the School of Forestry

OVERSEAS CONTACTS

Indonesian Students
The Indonesian Ministry of Forestry has drawn up a ten-year programme to upgrade the skills of its staff, and is hoping to place a thousand students worldwide during that time. In this connection a delegation from Indonesia recently visited the School of Forestry on the initiative of the Joint Committee for Forestry Cooperation (JCFC), established in 1991.

The School has for some time been accepting graduate Indonesian students: 11 are currently studying for Masters or Doctoral degrees. In addition, School staff have undertaken promotional work in Indonesia.

Not only does the School have something substantial to offer the Indonesian programme, but there are spin-offs for New Zealand too. This country needs to become a player in global forestry, and helping educate Indonesian foresters provides an opportunity to establish valuable contacts.

IUFRO
Geoiff Sweet attended a IUFRO Working Group meeting on “Biological and Cultural Reproductive Processes in Forest Trees” at the University of Victoria, B.C., Canada in August. New Zealand is a leader in seed orchard technology, and the School has an active research programme, with four postgraduate students currently working in this area. Professor Sweet contributed one keynote address and co-authored five other presentations with his graduate students.

Commonwealth Forestry Conference
In September, Graham Whyte attended the 14th Commonwealth Conference in Kuala Lumpur. He reports that the 400 or so delegates from 41 countries strongly supported the outcomes of the 1992 UNCED meeting in Rio de Janeiro and the international initiatives of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development. In other words the pendulum had swung back hard from the previous meeting in Rotorua, and emphasised the beneficial effects of forests in providing a multiplicity of benefits to communities.

Dr Whyte also took advantage of the opportunity to visit a number of forestry operations in Sarawak, and to discuss forestry study at Canterbury with a number of potential postgraduate students. His visit there was much enhanced by insights and study tours provided by former students.

British Wood Preservers’ Association
Dr Kevin Archer presented a paper on “Bacterial pre-treatment of Douglas fir roundwood to improve preservative treatability” at the AGM of the Association in Cambridge, England. The paper was based on his Ph.D. studies at the School of Forestry with John Walker and John Allen.

Study Leave
Dr David Norton returned in July, having spent six months in Australia, mainly based at the CSIRO Wildlife and Ecology Division laboratories in Alice Springs and Perth. He was involved in collaborative research on forest fragmentation and mistletoe ecology.

Dr Ted Bilek also returned in July from a 12-month sabbatical. He spent most of the time in Madison, Wisconsin working at the USDA Forest Service Forest Products Laboratory and at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. While on leave, he conducted research into the economics of breaking down and burning wood pallets in addition to teaching an operations research class.

TEACHING
Following recent and impending changes to undergraduate papers, an internal review of the curriculum is being undertaken to see if it is desirable or possible to present the subjects in a more logical sequence. An early result has been recognition of the need for a Silvics paper in the degree course.

RESEARCH
Dr Norton recently received a $2500 research contract from DoC to undertake research on “Assessing the effectiveness of possum control on forest ecosystem health”.

EXTENSION
Forest Engineering Institute
The School of Forestry, in conjunction with the Logging Industry Research Organisation, will be holding another Forest Engineering Institute from November 22 to February 4. The FEI is a mid-career training course designed for logging managers and planners, and it is expected that 20 individuals from New Zealand, Malaysia and Australia will attend this intensive eight-week residential course, which will include a week in Nelson studying logging and road operations. The course Director will be well-known forestry consultant Bill Liley, with Don Robinson from LIRO and Ron O’Reilly from the School acting as Assistant Directors.

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References
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