fibre users wither away in the face of rising energy costs. Above all, perhaps, they give us an environmentally benign raw material, streets ahead of metals and concrete. They can be better managed. They will be better managed, in all senses of the word, but is it to anyone’s advantage if they go away?

There is hope. Grant draws attention to John Wardle’s innovative forest management, in both natural and plantation forest, so in a first tiny way he acknowledges that forestry in both dimensions exists. But he still needs to decide which side of the fence he sits on. If it is on the side of forests and wood, he needs to sit down for a month and think about New Zealand solutions, to get around and see things, meet forestry people and get a measure of what is going on. Is preaching the best way to get us round to his way of thinking, or is he only looking for the plaudits of his peers in other environmental organisations?

Above all he mustn’t open his overseas mail for a month and he must stop effectively dumping the consequences of our environmental virtue on third world countries. Be original. Be a Goldstein. A la lanterne McWorld.

John Purey-Cust

Reply by Grant Rosoman

Sir,

I urge John Purey-Cust to read my article again. The answers to many of the long list of questions and assertions he makes in his sermon can be found there. He is also well aware of previous publications, policies and articles where Greenpeace has made its position very clear on plantations. In short, Greenpeace supports plantations that are: protecting and restoring indigenous ecosystems; incorporating diversity in species selection and lay-out; not using GE trees; phasing out toxic, bioaccumulative and persistent pesticide use; supported or have the participation of indigenous landowners; and providing social benefits to local communities. We are participating fully in the national process for Plantation Management Standards that is aiming to agree on the detail on these issues.

With certification NZ plantations are squarely placed in an international context. New Zealand plantation managers and tree growers can take a parochial view and be defensive of any criticism, however, change for plantations to become more like forests is inevitable. Can we call woodlots that won’t be replanted or 1000 ha radiata pine clearcut a forest? I would say clearly no. Social and environmental concerns over short rotation plantations in the tropics are certainly another dimension again on New Zealand. However, the New Zealand Government is at the forefront internationally in promoting the expansion of plantations without taking care to distinguish good from bad, and also simply to find an easy way out for New Zealand in meeting Kyoto requirements and avoiding fossil fuel use reduction.

I won’t respond here to John’s many inaccuracies and presumptions about Greenpeace and me personally, other than to say that I’m visiting plantations and forests frequently, both in New Zealand and elsewhere. I’m a tree grower myself, and have been a supporter of John Wardle’s restoration forestry for 10 years. What intrigues me is with the widespread acclaim for John Wardle, why are there virtually no others following suit?

Grant Rosoman

Forest ownership dilemma a numbers game?

Sir,

Thank you for your editorial and the articles you published on forest ownership in the May 2003 issue of the NZ Journal of Forestry. I had wondered why some of the larger forest industry companies were selling off part or all of their forests when not long ago they bought them or were expanding their plantings. These articles have helped me understand the thinking.

As an old fashioned forester, we were brought up on Working Plans, Working Circles, an assured wood supply within a realistic cost distance and providing additional forests for any future mill expansions. The Forestry Encouragement Schemes and tax concessions meant that the total forest area grew considerably. The 1981 Forestry Development Conference, the Central North Island Planning Study (CNIPS) and the Northland Transport Studies were all of the “Think Big” style of the time. Little of them have come to pass even 20 years later. In fact in 1988 we were talking about a wood shortage in the Central North Island from 1990 to 1996 and that didn’t happen either. It is no wonder that financiers and economists cannot grapple well with the forest planning and long-term forest economics. Level of debt is stated as a real problem too.

Now the major forest industry corporates want to sell off their forests. Certainly they will guarantee 50% of their wood supply needs with contracts. But it is not very long ago that Carter Holt Harvey Ltd. made more profit out of their Forest Division than from any of their other divisions. Forest investors and timber investment management organisations (TIMO’s) expect to do well...