

LETTERS

Thoughts on the 1995 NZIF Conference

Sir,

Let's start with the good things. The venue, in particular the auditorium and the trade exhibition hall, was very satisfactory. Overall projection facilities were also satisfactory, apart from the overhead projector getting in the way at times, and insufficient dimming of the auditorium lighting. Catering was well done, and the social functions excellent, particularly the dinner at Manuel's where the food was exceptional for a conference of this size.

The scientific programme produced some thought-provoking and first-class presentations. Regrettably the programme was overfull. There was a total absence of discussion after any paper on both days – a situation that I have never before encountered in any of the numerous scientific meetings I have attended. Absence of discussion is most disappointing to those many speakers who had put so much time and effort into their papers, and diminishes the value to the audience. As always, some speakers ran overtime, but the chairmen were all too gentlemanly! More rigorous chairing would have helped. On the subject of chairmen, it is useful to have them listed on the programme, and all chairmen should be notified well in advance of the contents of their particular session. Slides are always important. When will speakers learn not to put too much on a slide? It was also distressing in a national meeting of this calibre to see several speakers, who should have known better, stand off and read their slides, rather than elaborating on them.

The AGM, held in two parts, was almost six hours in duration. Although at annual meetings such as this, insufficient time is frequently allotted to the AGM, this one was in somewhat extreme contrast. The agenda was too full. Some items which did not need discussing could have been dealt with by handout only.

Finally, could I make a plea for the programme, or at least a summary of it, to be circulated three months before the meeting? It is appreciated that a programme may not be finalised at that stage, but certainly the main topics and speakers should be. Some of us need time to make arrangements, and may also wish to be selective.

Blair L.J. Treadwell

A commendation

Sir,

I would like to commend you and your editorial team on the quality of "New Zealand Forestry". The publication is a real flagship of the Institute and in my opinion one of the most valuable outputs of the Institute. The effort that has been put into the ongoing improvement of the style, presentation and content of the journal is appreciated by this reader. I hope that the high standards that have been reached will continue to be supported by the Council and members. Thank you for all your efforts that you have put into the Journal over the last few years.

Peter Casey

Kauri versus radiata

Sir,

John Purey-Cust (May 1995) asks if there is a flaw in David Bellamy's argument that kauri growth is "faster growing" than radiata pine. The 'evidence' presented is that Tane Mahuta has a Mean Annual Increment (MAI) of 0.2 m³/ha/year, whereas a typical radiata pine in a stand of 300 stems/ha has only 0.07 m³/ha/year. Assuming that these figures are correct, and in both cases refer to *recoverable* volumes, we must still consider the following.

The figures for kauri come from a selected sample, with a sample size of one. One can seek out individual radiata pine trees that do just as well. For example, the best radiata pine in the GTI demonstration area, Long Mile Road, Rotorua has a volume of 4 m³ at age 20 – the same MAI as Tane Mahuta.

Tane Mahuta is growing at a very low stocking, thereby giving good individual tree growth but lousy per hectare growth. For example, the final crop stocking trial at Tikitere has a MAI for the 400 stems/ha plots of 35.4 m³/ha/year at age 21, but only 0.09 m³/tree. By contrast, the MAI for the 50 stems/ha plots averages only 7.0 m³/ha/year at age 21 but with a respectable 0.15 m³/tree/

The MAIs for the two species are taken at two different ages. If you look at the yield tables for radiata pine and Douglas fir (Neuman and Perley, 1992, National Exotic Forest Description Yield Tables, MOF, Wgtn), you will notice that radiata has a higher recoverable volume up to age 50, but after that Douglas fir excels. Douglas fir is therefore a "faster growing" species if a time-frame of 50-80 years is used, but not otherwise.

It is naive to consider that "fast

growth" is synonymous with MAI, and that this is the only criterion for selecting a tree species. "Fast growth" can refer to rotation age, initial height growth, diameter growth or many other things. Moreover, I suggest that there are five criteria that determine a profitable forestry investment: recoverable volume at harvest, average stumpage price per unit volume, cost of production, timing of costs and revenues, and finally the investment risk. "Fast growth" as used by Bellamy refers only to the first of these.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate John on his articles which are always stimulating and extremely well-written, even if I do not always agree with them (as in this case).

Piers Maclaren

NZIF reply to Grant Rosoman

Sir,

I have been asked by the NZIF Council to reply to Grant Rosoman's letter in the May 1995 issue of NZ Forestry. Essentially, Mr Rosoman's letter asks: Where does the Institute stand on the issue of conversion of indigenous forest to plantation forest with particular regard to the Forest Accord? Mr Rosoman quotes two examples of contractors who have allegedly broken the intent of the Accord by clearing indigenous forest for pine plantation.

As Mr Rosoman is aware, the Institute is not a signatory to the Accord, nor has it ratified the Accord. Some discussion did take place on the possibility of the Institute ratifying the Accord at the Institute AGM in Napier in 1993. Opinions were divided on this issue and ultimately the idea lapsed. The Institute is, however, currently providing comment on the *Principles for Commercial Plantation Forestry Management* which is being prepared by the Forest Accord partners. There is a real possibility that the Institute may be asked to be a signatory to this document. The Indigenous Working Group of the Institute will be taking a clean-slate approach to a number of questions regarding indigenous forest management, including revisiting the term 'indigenous forest'. Through this work it is hoped that the Institute may be able to take a firmer position with regard to a number of issues, including those raised by Mr Rosoman in his letter.

With regard to the Institute's role in monitoring consultant activities, Mr Rosoman should be aware that the Institute maintains a consultant recognition scheme for New Zealand forest consultants. This

scheme is voluntary and by no means covers all forest consultants or contractors in New Zealand. Under the scheme, consultants are required to meet certain conditions and the Institute's Code of Ethics. However, there is no requirement on recognised consultants to meet the conditions in the Forest Accord.

Tim Thorpe
Convenor, Environmental
Working Group
NZ Institute of Forestry

Far North Afforestation replies to Greenpeace

Sir,

It is important to set the record straight following a series of inaccuracies and incorrect assumptions in the letter from Greenpeace correspondence Grant Rosoman published in your May issue.

The first matter to deal with is the "recent incidences reported to Greenpeace", included in which is Mr Rosoman's allegation that Far North Afforestation Limited roller crushed 200 hectares of regenerating native forest south of Kaitaia.

This is total nonsense. FNA has never been, and will never be, involved in practices which destroy what any reasonable person would recognise as New Zealand native bush or forest. In fact, this company has retained many hundred hectares of quality native bush as part of our development operations.

I cannot speak for all managers and contractors, but if Mr Rosoman and his fellows believe that they have a mortgage on concerns for the natural environment of this beautiful country then he is one who is misguided and irresponsible. Ill-informed comment like his, without knowledge of all the facts, does more to bring the green lobby into disrepute than anything this industry could say or do.

As other correspondents to NZ Forestry have already noted, Mr Rosoman seems to be particularly confused about the Forest Accord, including who signed it and who accepts it. FNA has never signed it, and we never would in its current form because it is totally unrealistic and unenforceable. I believe that even those companies involved in the negotiations which led to the Accord will be taken aback to learn that the environmentalists are now trying to include rough scrub country in their definition of a forest or bush.

I have no doubt that all participants in

the forestry industry in this country accept that there is need for some general acceptance of standards and operating procedures which address the concerns of both sides. But there is a growing body of opinion which says that the Forest Accord does not achieve this. The first instrument of the Accord defines a native tree as "any indigenous woody plant which ultimately forms part of the canopy of a naturally occurring forest ..."

If that is to be the literally applied standard by which the whole industry operates then the national economy will be devastated by the collapse of a major contributor to the country's business, employment, financial and export infrastructure.

If we are ever to achieve common ground, Mr Rosoman, we must start talking common sense.

We support the total protection of quality native bush and forest. We simply cannot accept the foolish attitude which says that every little bit of scrub must be saved forever.

Many smaller forestry managers and developers are cynical about the big forest companies represented by the signatures on the Accord - they had their forests well established before the Accord was ever dreamed up. And Mr Rosoman well knows that all major plantings are now being done by private investors and forestry development companies. In fact, 80 per cent of the 90,000 hectares planted in the last year were planted by private investors.

If Mr Rosoman and his cohorts were to spend more of their time and effort developing a philosophy that recognises that both sides of this argument have a legitimate point of view, and that both sides should try much harder to work together, they would make a far more meaningful contribution to make this country a better place for the future.

Graeme Jespersen
Chief Executive
Far North Afforestation (NZ)
Limited

Native scrub clearing - Waingake

Sir,

In reply to Mr Rosoman's letter I would make the following comments.

The area felled (approximately 18.0 hectares) comprised a mixture of manuka, 4-metre-high kanuka, fern, mingimingi and a small percentage of young podocarps. Had the podocarps been left standing, they would have died in the

burnoff and shaded the radiata seedlings. An area of larger podocarps and beech species (6.5 hectares) was left because of the presence of what was in our view a significant stand of native species. The area left was also larger than required by the Gisborne District Council under the Resource Consent.

As a consequence I believe Kohntrol Forest Services acted responsibly when the block was developed. Of the 9280 hectares under Kohntrol's management, 10-12% of this area has not been planted because it is covered in native vegetation.

The cost to the client is significant and affects the investors' return by effectively increasing the cost per plantable hectare.

I believe it is a matter of finding a balance between scrub that should be felled so that plantations may be established (and thereby inherently protecting more significant forests in other areas) and retaining bush within plantations which are important.

Mr Rosoman's suggestion that consultants have been giving their clients poor advice presupposes we are all tarred with the green brush. If we were then we certainly would be giving them poor advice.

My limited knowledge of the Accord leads me to believe that it has gone too far in restricting the felling of native species and it can only do harm to the environment and the economy in the long term. A classic example of this was the Ngati Porou Whanui Forests Limited/Tasman Joint Venture which was halted for that reason.

Julian Kohn
Kohntrol Forest Services Ltd

The public's perception of Forestry

Sir,

We should not be too surprised at the apparent lack of public insight towards our forest industries referred to by Peter Hill (NZ Forestry, May 1995). I believe each of us should look critically at our own contribution towards communicating with a community who are not aware of the potential that is accumulating within our forests.

Little has changed since the days leading up to the dismemberment of the Forest Service when we were about to pay the penalty for failing to communicate our aims and achievements over three-quarters of a century of forest expansion. Yet by comparison with today's level of dialogue, we were still comparatively well served with avenues of communication.

At least pre-1987 we still enjoyed a