

porate memory leads to future repetition of past mistakes with greater ramifications. There is still a little time available to restore some of the corporate memory which has been lost.

One of those losses has been effective contribution to socio-economic analysis of forestry in the national and local community economies. MAF still holds skills in socio-economic analysis and closer association between MOF and MAF could redress this imbalance.

Implementation of the Biosecurity Act has been promoted as a reason for a MOF/MAF merger. However, there is already effective collaboration, and evidence is not apparent that a merger would improve effectiveness. Action taken on the national threat of the white-spotted tussock moth demonstrated the benefit of a strong coordinated forestry sector approach to dealing with the problem. In the final analysis the agricultural knowledge of dealing with the earlier fruit fly threat provided little practical benefit to dealing with the white-spotted tussock

moth threat.

An important sector of forestry in New Zealand which the Institute has not been able to canvass is Maori forestry. The Ministry of Forestry has an important job in management of around 50,000 hectares of Maori forestry leases. However, Maori forestry covers a much larger area – of the order of 200,000 hectares. It has been predicted that within ten years Maori forestry will cover 500,000 hectares. The Treaty of Waitangi requires the Crown to protect tino rangatiratanga over Maori forests and land.

The big question is whether the needs of forestry which have been described can be met in a merged MOF/MAF.

Two overseas examples can be cited. The Australian Bureau of Agricultural Research and Economics has been set up to cover economic research in both forestry and agriculture, but staff turnover and loss of corporate forestry knowledge has resulted in a diminishing input into forestry. Where a merger might appear to have worked is in the US Department of

Agriculture; however this is only because the US Forest Service effectively functions as an entirely independent department within the Department of Agriculture.

The attempt in New Zealand to merge the disparate central government agencies for fisheries and agriculture failed. There is a similar risk in merging forestry and agriculture. Unless a new corporate identity can be attained, and the public not be confused by an acronym of MAF for Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, a merger could be detrimental to the national interest. A swamping of 170 MOF staff with 2400 MAF staff spells subjugation of the national forestry interest.

Summary

The New Zealand Institute of Forestry believes that any merits in merging Ministry of Forestry with the Ministry of Agriculture will be far outweighed by loss in national forest policy focus and loss in corporate memory.

New Ministry for Agriculture and Forestry

A new Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry is to be formed by merging the Ministry of Agriculture (MAF) and the Ministry of Forestry (MOF).

"The merger is aimed at tighter coordination of government services to the vitally important agriculture, forestry and horticulture sectors," said Agriculture and Forestry Minister Lockwood Smith.

"Bringing the two ministries together will enable a more integrated policy and service delivery approach to these sectors, which are increasingly interrelated.

"MAF and MOF have similar functions and combining the ministries will enhance the cooperation that already exists between them.

"In the biosecurity area, in particular, it provides the opportunity to share and focus resources for biosecurity risk management for agriculture and forestry," Dr Smith said.

"Pooling MAF and MOF's biosecurity expertise will therefore strengthen the capabilities of the two existing organisations and their support for the Minister for Biosecurity's recently established Biosecurity Council."

The transition to the new Ministry – due to be operational by March 1 next year – will be carefully managed to ensure no disruption to services currently provided by MAF and MOF.

The Minister noted industry concern that a merger could mean that the Gov-

ernment's focus on forestry would be less clear.

"But I can assure foresters that the move does not signal any weakening of the Government's commitment to their sector. Forestry is far too important to the economy for it to take a back seat to agriculture," Dr Smith said.

Costs associated with the merger are expected to be more than offset by savings stemming from cost-effectiveness gains.

Environmental Working Group update

ISO 14000

The finalising of the ISO 14,000 technical report on forestry has been delayed, and will probably not occur now until the first quarter of 1998. The last formal meeting of interested New Zealand parties took place in July, with final editing due to be carried out overseas.

Harvesting and Land Establishment Workshops

The Environmental Working Group has been working with Forme consultants on preparing a series of environmental workshops on land establishment and harvesting operations. The workshops will be held around the country between October 1997 and March 1998 and notice of these workshops will be forwarded to Institute members. For more information contact:

Peter Handford, Forme Consultants, tel: 04-232 7155; fax: 04-232 9472.

Forest Accord and Principles

The Environmental Working Group will be meeting with *NZ Forest Accord* partners to elaborate on some of the concerns raised by Institute members over the *Accord* and the *Principles for Commercial Plantation Forest Management*. The meeting takes place in late August.

Position Statement on Biodiversity

The NZIF draft position statement on biodiversity should appear in the next issue of *NZ Forestry*, along with related articles on biodiversity from various experts in the field. Institute members will be asked to provide comment on the position statement.

International Negotiations

There are a number of conventions in international circles such as the Framework Convention on Climate Change, and Convention on Biological Diversity to which New Zealand is a signatory party. Discussion has also been proceeding on establishing an international Convention on Forestry, but progress has been delayed recently in favour of progressing work in other areas such as developing criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. Nevertheless it is highly likely that within a period of some five years a forestry convention will be negotiated, which will be binding on signatory countries, and could have a major influence on international forestry trade.

It is particularly important for New Zealand to ensure that its position on forestry is well represented in any discussions on a convention or any preparatory negotiations that precede it.

To this end, it is interesting to note the change in approach that was highlighted in this column in the May issue, where New Zealand's forestry ambassadors are now taking a broader approach to New Zealand's forestry. The NZ Forest Industries Council is also beginning to take the message abroad that New Zealand forestry is more than just plantation forestry, which is viewed as unsustainable forestry

Otago-Southland 19th Annual Study Trip Tramp

Tentative arrangements have been made for the 1998 tramp to the South East Coast of Stewart Island. The plan is to travel by launch from Bluff to Big Kuri Bay (a delightful spot) on Thursday, February 12 and then to tramp through untracked virgin podocarp forest to Toitoe Flats, on to Table Hill on the Tin Range, and then on to Freds Camp on the SW arm of Paterson Inlet where a launch will transport the party back to Bluff on Monday, February 16.

The forest along the coast to Toitoe Flats (the writer is familiar with) belongs to the Rakiura Maoris and permission has been obtained to tramp through it. Kiwis are plentiful in this area and most likely they will be seen during daytime tramping.

An invitation is extended to members throughout New Zealand to join this visit to an interesting remote part of Stewart Island. However, because only two launch operators are permitted in this area and February is a busy season for them we would need to know final numbers participating by the end of November to enable firm bookings to be made. One launch takes 12 people and the other 22. Numbers may need to be limited. Therefore bookings could be on a first-come first-served basis.

For further information and bookings please contact:

Jim Smith
86 Glenpark Avenue
DUNEDIN
Ph (03) 453 5143

in some parts of the world. By highlighting New Zealand's forest diversity it is hoped that countries abroad will become more aware of the total forest matrix in

New Zealand, and the role that plantations play within that matrix.

Tim Thorpe

The Russian Far East in perspective

Background

A country of vast proportions, resources and potential, Russia has 57 per cent of the world's timber resource of 107 billion cubic metres, compared to North America with 28 billion cubic metres (see Table 1). The estimated allowable cut is 500 million cubic metres per annum.

Table 1: World Timber Supply
(Source: FAO)

Country	Standing Volume
Russia	57%
Canada	14%
USA	12%
Europe	9%
Other	8%
Total	100%

All of Russia east of the Ural Mountains represents an immense area of forested land. The Russian Far East (RFE) is currently of particular interest. It not

only has some of the more productive forest, it has major seaports around Vladivostok, an east-west railroad, and is the Russian gateway to the Pacific Rim.

The total area of the Russian Far East is 6.63 million square kilometres or 40 per cent of the Russian Federation. The population is 9.2 million people (1.4 people per square kilometre). Forests cover 45 per cent of the territory and the region is rich in natural resources.

To the Russians, Siberia and the Russian Far East represent a mix between eastern-block European countries and the rapidly developing Asian region. Eastern Russia was one of the last regions to be settled, like the West Coast of the United States. It is the gateway to Siberia and the Russian Far East. Forty per cent of Russia's imports come through the eastern seaports (including Nakhodka and Olga).

Vladivostok is the port gateway to the Russian Far East and has an infectious energy and transience about it with the comings and goings of a huge maritime and military naval fleet. Kharbarovsk is further inland, one day's journey from Vladivostok and the start of the trans

David Neal, formerly General Manager, Evergreen Forests Ltd, travelled to the Russian Far East on a visit organised by the Ministry of Forestry in August 1996. David was the recipient of the 1996 Chavasse Travel Award administered by the NZIF and on his return to New Zealand provided this article for New Zealand Forestry. David's full report is available from the NZIF Secretariat.

Siberian railway, and it considers itself the capital or administration centre of the Russian Far East.

The Russian Far East forests are a highly variable resource in size, species and quality (see Tables 2 and 3). This contrasts markedly with the situation in New Zealand but provides for marketing diversity and well-differentiated products. A high level of multiple use of forests such as collecting mushrooms, nuts and berries, hunting and fishing has led to high conservation pressures.