

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.