

MORE HEFT GOES INTO DRIVE FOR ZERO

THE FOA IS HIRING A SAFETY EXPERT TO HELP MAKE FORESTRY A SAFER PLACE TO WORK.

Since the mid-1990s the sector's accident and fatality rates have improved. Initiatives driven by the FOA's health and safety committee, assisted by the Department of Labour and ACC, have all played their part. But since the mid-2000s progress has slowed. Compared with other sectors where people do physical work outdoors, forestry still has the highest fatality rate with an average of 22.4 fatalities per 100,000 workers, closely followed by the utility (electricity, gas and water) and fishing industries.

Around four people die in forestry accidents each year. Importantly, about half these deaths occur outside commercial forests – on farms and other sites – and most occur in the highest risk activities, tree felling and breaking out.

The Department of Labour's records also show that forestry and logging has the highest rate of serious harm accidents, around 18 for every 1000 fulltime workers. In the next most injury-prone sectors, mining and utilities, accident rates are less than half those of forestry.

"We're absolutely determined to reduce this," says FOA health and safety committee member Wayne Dempster.

"The keys are growing our safety culture, stamping out worker impairment, increased mechanisation, making codes of practice easy to understand and follow, better training and fair and consistent enforcement."

Adding grunt to the drive for better safety performance is the government. It has directed the Department of Labour to focus its workplace safety efforts on five priority sectors including forestry. The department's Forestry Sector Action Plan draws heavily on FOA initiatives.

Fellow committee member Nic Steens says the FOA has signed up to the plan.

"A key element in the plan – and the focus of some significant changes in forest operations – is a revised *Approved Code of Practice for Forest Operations (ACOP)*.

The code has been simplified, so there is no confusion about what to do when you're on the job. It includes new rules for establishing a safe retreat distance during breaking out."

The rules allow crews the flexibility to develop a plan to manage safe retreat based on the terrain and the cable system being used. If they don't have a documented plan, a default system kicks in. This involves a safe retreat distance of at least 1½ tree lengths, based on the length of the average stem in the block. This distance has to be clearly marked with flags or other visible markers.

"This provision is controversial because it takes time for workers to retreat and time is money. But how much cost do you put on the lives and livelihoods of the men who are killed or badly injured each year during breaking out? If we are serious about safety, this is a pill we have to swallow," Steen says.

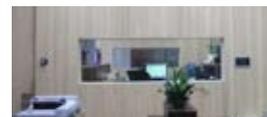
The code was initially revised by the FOA health and safety committee and has been through several rounds of consultation. Final submissions are now coming in to the Department of Labour for review by a

IN THIS ISSUE

PAGE 2
Levy process on track



PAGE 5
Lessons from Austria



PAGE 6
We need an ETS that works



stakeholder committee that includes the FOA, contractors, FITEC and the Department of Labour.

FOA senior policy analyst Glen Mackie says the FOA will shortly hire a forest safety expert on contract. His job will be to roll out a range of safety culture initiatives, develop the breaker-out certification programme and to develop a similar programme for tree-felling.

"Among other things, this person will also be working to ensure that forestry businesses with a high level of health and safety compliance are rewarded through reduced ACC levies."

Mackie says Dempster and Steens, along with Les Bak and other members of the FOA health and safety committee, have put in a huge voluntary effort for all forest owners, laying the groundwork for initiatives that have the potential to make zero serious harm injuries an achievable goal.

"But these guys can only do so much. It's the time to hire someone to do the roll-out, to make sure these safety initiatives become standard practice throughout the industry."

Renewed safety effort is getting results, *Forestry Bulletin*, Winter 2010

Draft *Approved Code of Practice (ACoP) for Forest Operations*: <http://bit.ly/GZcoKH>

Safety in our forests

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Fatalities (DoL)	3	4	4	4	3
Serious harm notifications (DoL)	174	178	161	169	183
New ACC entitlement claims	362	395	372	352	328
Cost of ACC claims in year of injury (\$million)	9.74	10.18	11.88	11.88	9.92
Roundwood removals (m³)	19.9	20.4	18.9	22.0	22.1

Log transport figures not included



FORKING OUT FOR ALL

THE FOA BOARD IS WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE FARM FORESTRY ASSOCIATION (NZFFA) TO DEVELOP A PROPOSAL FOR A COMMODITY LEVY.

For many decades the FOA has been fortunate to have the unwavering financial support of the owners of most of New Zealand's plantation forest estate. While voluntary, their commitment enables the association to work effectively for their common good. The Farm Forestry Association also enjoys the backing of a loyal group of volunteers.

But times are a-changing.

The ownership of New Zealand's existing production forests is becoming more disparate. New plantings are tending to be smaller than we have seen in the past and will increasingly be driven by new earning opportunities such as bioenergy and carbon (if we can get the ETS working).

Meanwhile there is a growing recognition of the need for more research to help forest owners efficiently produce higher yields of forest products that meet market specifications. Much of this research needs to be done collectively because it allows efficiencies and scale unavailable to individual owners.

Funding production research is a challenge for voluntarily funded organisations, because there is no practical way to ensure that knowledge that flows from that research goes only to those who pay. Also, with voluntary funding it is hard to commit to funding research programmes that extend over several years – as many do.

Similarly, New Zealand needs world-class biosecurity research and monitoring – the benefits of which cannot be restricted only to those who pay. Nor should it be. This is particularly true of forestry where crop replacement is measured in decades rather than years.

Both Labour and National have made it clear that they are committed to investing taxpayer funds in research and biosecurity, because of the benefits to the nation. But in both cases they want producers to play a bigger role – both in the decision-making and the funding.

Then there is increasing demand from both



Safety research. Improved workplace safety is an industry priority, so would be likely to get the big tick for levy funding

WHERE FARMS AND FORESTS DIFFER

Most primary industries work on annual production cycles, making the deduction of levies from sale proceeds reasonably straightforward. Levying forest products once every 30 years or more throws up some unique challenges.

Who gets to vote at annual meetings and referendums? If a levy applies only to harvested forest products, what of the forest owner who has just planted a single age class forest? It will be a long time before they pay a levy on production, yet they will get the benefits of levies paid by others.

Getting our heads around this aspect of the industry will take further thought. A possibility is a dual levy – on seedlings as well as harvested forest products.

Whatever system the FOA and FFA come up with it will need to be simple, relatively inexpensive and easy to audit.

Another unusual characteristic of forestry is the polarisation of ownership in the sector, with around 80 per cent of the national estate owned by 20 companies, with the balance owned in thousands of small parcels.

This has implications for governance. Current thinking is that a trust should be established to manage the levy and to allocate it to organisations providing agreed services – principally the FOA and FFA. Both associations would still have their own voluntary subscription-paying members.

The trust board membership model being mooted is four members elected at a general meeting of levy payers (with votes based on the value of production), two representatives of the FFA (one from each island), plus an independent appointed jointly by the presidents of the FOA and FFA.

This model would ensure that representatives of those with smaller forests have a say in how levy funds are used. It's important their voices are heard because they make up the majority of potential levy payers, even if they represent only 20 per cent or so of production.

Such a model is not necessarily perfect, but it does tick a lot of boxes and would provide our fast growing industry with a reliable platform for planning its future.

“There has been common agreement on most activities that should be collectively funded. These include workplace safety, training and the development of best management practices ...”

inside and outside the industry for generic promotion and market awareness strategies across the value chain.

A commodity levy is a fairer way to fund these activities. Many owners of smaller blocks do not belong to either the FOA or FFA yet it is fair and reasonable that they should pay their share of the costs of activities from which they derive benefit.

For all these reasons it is time to question whether the voluntary funding model that has served us so well in the past is right for the future.

The biggest benefit of a collective model is that it will increase two-way communications across the industry. Those foresters who

don't belong to the FOA or FFA are not plugged into industry decision-making and information systems. They need to be, especially on potential crisis issues like biosecurity and right-to-operate issues, like district plan rules under the RMA.

Sure, if more funding is needed for industry-good activities, broadening the pool of funders will ease the burden a little on those who chip in voluntarily. But only a little, because in both voluntary and compulsory funding systems, those owning the largest forests will continue to fork out most of the funds.

Given all this, the FOA has taken the lead in investigating the potential for a compulsory levy.

Commodity levies are regulated by the Commodity Levies Act, which allows any primary sector group to levy producers for activities carried out for the common good. Such a levy must get a new voter mandate every five years.

Levy payers decide annually what work areas the levy will be used to fund, along with the levy rate required to fund them.

A conceptual proposal was presented by the FOA at 14 public meetings in February.

The feedback was overwhelmingly supportive, although many recommendations for improvement were made.

These have been taken on board and a more detailed proposal has been developed by FOA in collaboration with the FFA. Some more refinement is needed before a final version is expected to be put to a vote by all forest owners via a referendum later this year. If they vote 'yes', the new levy will come into effect in mid-2013.

The referendum must achieve the support of a majority of producers – both by number and by volume of production. The Ministry of Primary Industry (MPI) will keep a close eye on the whole process, to

ensure potential levy payers are properly informed and consulted, before making a recommendation to the minister. There has been common agreement on most activities that should be collectively funded. These include

forest management issues such as: workplace safety, training and the development of best management practices.

Forest owners also need to have a collective input into policies, legislation and regulations at all levels of government. Keeping up with this work, along with the complexities of the ETS, is becoming increasingly time-consuming for FOA staff and committee members.

An expanded forest health surveillance scheme will doubtless get the tick for levy funding. As will growers' contributions to the Woodco industry development strategy and the *NZ Wood* promotion campaign.

Research too is well supported but with the caveat that it must involve projects that, by and large, benefit the whole industry. It is clear that, as with other industries, the levy will sometimes contribute only part of the funding required. In some cases research will continue to be undertaken by individual enterprises or coalitions of the willing.

THOUGHTS?

Feedback about the proposed commodity levy has been wide-ranging and valuable. But the door remains open for further constructive suggestions.

For the industry to make progress, we need a funding solution that is designed by forest owners for forest owners.

Please contact the FOA national office or your local NZFFA branch. Your input will be welcomed.

RESEARCH

WHAT DOES GE OFFER?

MORE EFFORT NEEDS TO GO INTO EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL FOR GE TECHNOLOGY IN FORESTRY.

Forest owners and scientists who attended a GE workshop in February want a strategy to be developed that will enable potential risks and benefits to be studied with more urgency and commitment.

“The sector doesn't have the information needed to take a position for or against the production and release of GE plantation trees. So we are not pro-GE as such. But we do believe there is an urgent need to catch up with our overseas competitors and explore what the technology has to offer,” says the FOA's biosecurity committee chair David Balfour.

GE is likely to be a very useful tool. But because of the long lead times before a GE variety could be released for commercial use, we need to get rolling now so that we are ready to move if the need arises.

“For example, there are diseases of radiata and Douglas-fir that, if they became established here, could be devastating. GE has the potential to provide answers to these issues and we need to be exploring them now.”

Engagement with the forest industry and the wider community, including iwi, environmental groups, the Forest Stewardship Council and the major political parties is vital. They need to understand why more research is needed and the potential benefits of GE for the wider community.

The initial priorities for research would be the development of sterile varieties of radiata and Douglas-fir. These could put an end to wilding spread and, if the varieties had no catkins, there would be no pollen drift. Sterile varieties would also be ideal recipients of other potentially beneficial genes, as there would be no risk of pollen or seedlings spreading into non-plantation ecosystems.

Other priorities include insect and disease resistance, along with productivity (wood quality and yield) improvement.

RUC SYSTEM STREAMLINED

The new road user charges system should make life easier for operators of forestry vehicles.

“The current scheme is costly to administer, unnecessarily complex, incurs high compliance costs and is prone to leakage and evasion. We have our fingers crossed that the new scheme will be much more efficient,” says FOA transport committee chair Brian Pritchard.

The Road User Charges Act 2012 became law on 14 February. When it comes into effect on 1 August it will replace the Road User Charges Act 1977.

The new law arises from a parliamentary review of the RUC system. During the review it was suggested that RUCs should be replaced by a diesel fuel tax.

“Fortunately that idea was knocked on the head, or every off-road diesel user would have wasted a huge amount of time claiming refunds.”

Under the new legislation all RUC vehicles will be assigned a permanent RUC weight. For light vehicles and smaller trucks this will usually be the manufacturer’s maximum gross weight. For larger trucks it is likely to be the maximum weight allowable for that type of vehicle under the Vehicle Dimensions and Mass Rule 2002.

Operators of vehicles used routinely to carry overweight loads may opt for a special “H vehicle” RUC licence. This will enable them to carry weights up to the maximum under a high productivity vehicle permit at all times. Vehicles that operate overweight only occasionally, or carry varying overweight loads, can opt to purchase additional RUC licences to cover specific journeys.

FOA senior policy analyst Glen Mackie says there will be a very narrow range of RUC rates. This, together with a centralised database recording RUC purchases, means the new regime is likely to be fairer and more streamlined.

“The proof will be in the pudding, I guess. But we’re pretty positive that this is a move for the better.”

THE RING OF FIRE

THE FOA IS SUPPORTING SCION IN ITS LATEST BID FOR GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR FIRE RESEARCH.



Scion’s Grant Pearce on location
A growing demand for applied science

The bid, from the natural hazards ‘pot’, is for \$550,000 a year for the next four years. This will be leveraged by a sector contribution of \$185,000 of which \$60,000 comes from the FOA.

“Scion has done some excellent work in this area. Its team of research and extension specialists may be small but they are highly productive,” says Grant Dodson, the FOA’s newly elected fire committee chair.

“New Zealand does not need nor aspire to be a world leader in fire research, but it’s in everyone’s interest for our researchers to keep a close eye on what the leaders – in Victoria, Australia and on the west coast of North America – are doing.”

“Their role is to explore overseas findings and thinking, and to see whether they can be adapted and applied to the New Zealand situation. A lot of their work involves tech transfer with forest managers and fire crews,” Dodson says.

Scion senior fire researcher Grant Pearce



Grant Dodson

says rural fire management has become increasingly sophisticated in the last 20 years. A focus on greater professionalism and improved effectiveness has resulted in a growing demand for applied science.

“For every wildfire that breaks out, there is a fire manager reaching for Scion fire behaviour field manuals or calculators based on data collected from experimental burns and wildfires over many years. We are also seeing managers increasingly thinking about fire risk reduction and readiness.”

Dodson believes the trend toward a more professional approach to rural fire management will accelerate as the country’s 80 rural fire authorities progressively merge into larger regional authorities – a strategy driven by the New Zealand Fire Commission and supported by the FOA. Instead of being managed by part-time staff of varying competence, the larger authorities will be overseen by full-time managers who will be more accountable for their performance.

During 2011 Scion researchers completed two major fire climatology studies. One of these – into the fire climate severity across the country – is being used to help define the boundaries of the proposed enlarged rural fire districts. The second looked at the likely effects of climate change on future fire danger.

A doubling or even trebling of fire danger is possible in some areas as a result of temperature increases, higher wind speeds and lower humidity. The greatest relative changes are likely in areas where current fire dangers are comparatively low, such as coastal Southland and Wanganui. Smaller, but still significant, increases in fire danger are also predicted for hot spots like Gisborne and Christchurch.

As this issue of the *Bulletin* went to press, a Rural Fire Research Workshop was being convened at Scion, Rotorua, at which 20 years of rural fire research were being celebrated.

LESSONS FROM AUSTRIA

FORESTRY CONTRIBUTES ABOUT \$5 BILLION DOLLARS A YEAR TO THE NZ ECONOMY. YET AUSTRIA, WHICH HAS A SIMILAR SIZED HARVEST, EARNS \$15 BILLION MORE.

To find out why the two industries are so different, Marlborough Forest Owners Association president Michael Cambridge made two visits to Austria's smallest province, Vorarlberg, during 2011.

Vorarlberg's innovative use of traditional building materials has helped it become one of the fastest growing and wealthiest regions in the country.

"It attracts thousands of architectural tourists from all over Europe who come to see the clever, sustainable use of wood combined with clear, sleek design," says Cambridge.

"Like New Zealand, Austria had a tradition of building in wood until the 1960s, when there was a move to concrete, brick and plasterboard. But unlike New Zealand, this fashion change was short-lived. During the 1980s and 90s, a group of architects in Vorarlberg decided to promote wood architecture both old and new. Since then the innovative use of wood has taken off.

"In New Zealand, the swing back to wood has only just begun. Two of the three supreme winners in last year's Registered Master Builders house of the year featured wood. Wood performed well in the Canterbury earthquakes. Laminated veneer lumber is being recognised for its potential in commercial buildings as well as dwellings."

Cambridge believes there is no reason why our forest harvest cannot add as much value as it does in Austria. Radiata pine is well suited to high value prefabricated building components and ceiling and wall linings.

Cambridge had the good fortune in Vorarlberg to meet Gerhard Ludescher, the owner of a prefabricated wood business who gave him a guided tour of some inspiring wood-rich buildings. A selection of the photos Cambridge took appear on the NZ Wood website <http://bit.ly/GNm5WY>

Ludescher, who has since visited New Zealand, says nearly 50% of Austria is forested. Of this, 9.3% is in federal forest, 35.4% in private forests larger than 200 hectares and 55.3% in holdings <200 ha. Processing firms do not own any forests.

Adding value to forest products in the country where they are produced is good for the local economy and a source of local pride. Growers are benefiting too.

In October 2011 prices for softwood logs in

Austria were at a five year high, despite a bigger than usual harvest. Cambridge says logs of the main species, spruce, are selling for around E70-80/tonne and were recently at E100/tonne.

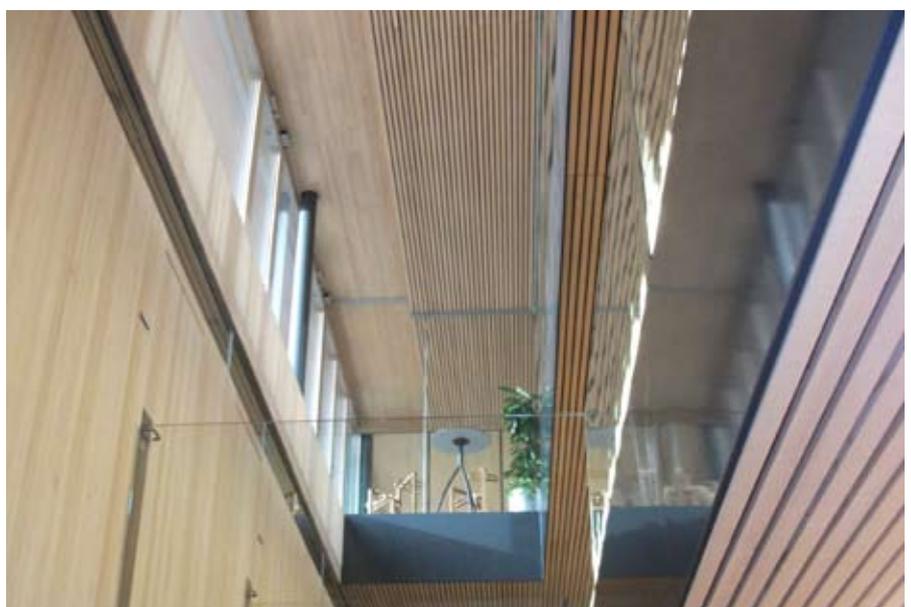
"The strong demand for CLT and glulam in Austria is putting pressure on supply. CLT manufacturers are paying E150-185/m³ for dry timber and producing CLT panels for E400-plus/m³ depending on specifications."

Cambridge believes the best model for winning a similar preference for wood in the New Zealand building industry is the

Merino wool industry. It took the New Zealand Merino Company 15 years to change the mindset about New Zealand Merino and to turn it from an undifferentiated commodity into a product sought after by consumers.

"As a result, innovative designers, manufacturers and marketers like *Untouched World*, *Icebreaker* and *Whippersnapper* have generated new product lines to their benefit as well as to the benefit of growers.

"How long will it take us to do this with New Zealand radiata?"



Wooden nickels anyone?

The bank in Vorarlberg is made totally out of wood, including the work areas and the foyer

WE NEED AN ETS THAT WORKS

LET'S FACE IT, THE EMISSION TRADING SCHEME IS A LEMON.

The optimism seen when carbon trading began three years ago has long gone and the planting of new forests stimulated by an additional return from carbon is virtually non-existent.

The government's response, released in March, to a independent review of the ETS has done nothing to encourage investment in forestry. Hopes that it would fix the policies which have made carbon forestry a risky investment have not yet been realised.

Those left reeling by an extremely volatile marketplace for carbon services have been put on indefinite hold while crucial decisions are made about a new carbon pricing mechanism.

To date, policymakers have been focussed on protecting emitters from the hypothetical risk of the market getting overcooked. The real threat, undercooking – the biggie for anyone who has invested in emission reductions or carbon forestry – has been ignored.

Not surprisingly, FOA members have asked their association to re-examine the fundamentals of the ETS and the place of forestry within it.

This is a sad state of affairs. For many years the FOA has argued that a financial value needed to be put on the environmental services forestry provides to the wider community.

The cleaner water, reduced hill country erosion and increased biodiversity that come with plantation forestry have real value, but forest owners don't get paid for them. Indeed, many district councils use rating policies and consent conditions under the RMA to discriminate against forestry over farming.

In the last decade, carbon sequestration has been added to the list of services provided by forestry. This important service has a cash value to New Zealand under the Kyoto Protocol and will continue to do so under the agreements that will replace it.

For post-1989 forest owners this appeared to be a good thing. By trading the NZ Emission Units (NZUs) generated by their forests there was the potential to earn an income from providing an environmental service, albeit accompanied by an equal level of future liability.

But this came at a cost. Under the ETS, owners of pre-1990 forests could not earn an income from the carbon stored in their forests. Worse still, they were handed a contingent liability for that carbon.

If they or any future owner ever fail to replant the forest following harvest or natural destruction they will be liable for the carbon loss. This liability varies with the carbon price, but in the last 18 months has ranged from \$5000 to \$20,000 a hectare.

.....

“It's almost as if New Zealand has an ETS that exists solely to be a flag that can be waved in international arenas to bolster our reputation for being 100% clean and green.”

.....

This is hugely unfair, especially when sectors that actually emit greenhouse gases from the burning of fossil fuels have had the financial cost of their emissions cushioned by taxpayer funded subsidies and price-caps.

In part recognition of this injustice, the Labour and National Governments agreed to pay token compensation to owners of pre-1990 forests ranging from 2.25 to 7.5

per cent of their total liability. One third of this has already been paid or will be paid in a 'first tranche' later this year.

One of the options the government now proposes in the ETS review document is that the balance – the second tranche – should not be paid. This is because it proposes giving forest owners the right to 'offset' their forests. In other words, to replant their forests in a new location following harvest.

If this comes to pass, either for all pre-1990 forest owners, or just for those who choose to offset, injustice will be piled on injustice. The token compensation is for a liability that remains with the forest forever and is reflected in lower values for the land under those forests.

Relocating a pre-1990 forest does not discharge that liability. It just shifts it to another location, where a new forest infrastructure – tracks, bridges, culverts and so on – will have to be established on land which, in most cases, will have to be purchased.

Relocating allows some of the loss of value to be recouped on the existing forest land, but it is partially offset by the loss of value of the farmland used for the relocated forest.

For many iwi with forests located within their rohe, relocation is not an option from



Carbon planting is coming to a halt

If forest owners believe future governments will continue to disadvantage them in order to benefit other New Zealanders, they won't invest in carbon forests

“New Zealand needs more trees planted to meet its Kyoto obligations and to adapt to a low-carbon future. If these trees are not planted, it will cost taxpayers dearly.”

a cultural perspective. Nor is it an option for many other forest owners – mum and dad investors, farmers with forestry blocks and corporates – where alternative land is too far away from where they are based, or would involve an investment they are not in a position to make.

Clearly it's no free lunch for forest owners. But it is for the government.

Because offsetting has been agreed internationally, if a forest owner chooses this option, from 2013 there will be no cost to the Treasury. To the contrary, if the formerly forested land is used to generate more income than it did in trees, the government is likely to benefit from greater tax revenue.

For a non-forest owner this is all terribly complex. It's complex enough for those involved. It also sounds like special pleading when an industry asks to be treated fairly by the government.

So why should anyone outside forestry care about this issue?

Quite simply, because New Zealand needs more trees planted in order to meet its Kyoto obligations and to adapt to a low-carbon future. If these trees are not planted, it will cost taxpayers dearly.

Like any other legitimate industry, forestry has a right to operate without having its assets appropriated by the government without fair compensation.

This happened when the NZ Government, the only government in the world to do so, brought the pre-1990 forests liability into the ETS. The ETS review paper, with its proposals to remove the second tranche of token compensation for this, is proposing it should happen again.

If forest owners believe future governments will continue to disadvantage them in order to benefit other New Zealanders, they won't invest in carbon forestry.

All major political parties have repeatedly said our economy needs to adapt to a low carbon future and that forestry is a vital part of that future, as well as a means of getting there.

This means putting a price on carbon that is sufficient to change behaviour, using the ETS as the mechanism. This is not happening at present and there is nothing in the ETS review to explain how it might happen in the future. The review spectacularly fails to join the dots between the stated intentions and what is needed to have an effective, functioning carbon market.

It's almost as if New Zealand has an ETS that exists solely to be a flag that can be waved in international arenas to bolster our reputation for being 100% clean and green.

If the government and the major opposition parties want the ETS to work they need to agree to a mechanism that allows for carbon prices to move within a range that is compatible with long-term business decisions. That range needs to be high enough to encourage emissions reduction, but not so high as to impose unfair costs on NZ businesses competing with other nations that have yet to put a price on carbon.



For cultural reasons, many iwi can't offset to land outside their rohe

The government suggests this may be achieved by auctioning NZUs and restricting the import of CERs. That sounds reasonable, so long as the mechanism is managed at arms length from politicians themselves, much as the Reserve Bank manages bank interest rates. Clearly no-one will invest in carbon forestry if carbon prices are to be determined by political whim.

Equally important is the setting of the initial price range, the economic benchmarks it could be linked to and how it might be adjusted over time. To date the government and opposition parties have been silent on these critical issues.

The FOA will be listening carefully to whatever emerges.

After four years experience of the ETS under successive governments, it's hard not to be disenchanted. Our submission to the ETS review addresses the policy changes proposed in the review document, but that will not be the end of the matter.

It's time for the FOA and its members to go back to first principles and review the ETS and the place of forestry within it.

BIOSECURITY

GOOD THING ABOUT NEW BUG

A eucalyptus pest found from South Africa to Brazil has finally made it to New Zealand.

The bronze bug (*Thaumastocoris peregrinus*) was found in March on willow peppermint trees (*Eucalyptus nicholii*) in East Tamaki, Auckland, in a routine Ministry of Primary Industry (MPI) survey of high risk sites.

A follow-up survey carried out in April 2012 within 5 km of the initial detection site found the bug on trees 3.5 km apart. MPI will continue to look for the pest, but since it appears to be well established and there are no known ways to eradicate it, the bronze bug is likely to be here to stay.

The bug is a native of Australia and is considered a serious pest in Australia, South Africa and South America. Once it is established in a new area it has shown it can spread rapidly.

“This is far from welcome news, but it says something very positive about New Zealand's biosecurity system that we haven't encountered the bug before, given its widespread distribution,” says FOA biosecurity committee chair David Balfour.

“Our border biosecurity people deserve a pat on the back for managing to keep it out of the country for as long as they have. After all, we are downwind of Australia and they are one of our biggest trading partners.”

Little was known about the bronze bug until damaging outbreaks occurred in its native range in the Sydney area in 2002.

In amenity plantings, systemic insecticide injections have been shown to provide control for two to three years. Longer term there may be potential to use pheromone traps, parasitoid wasps and insect predators. Approximately 30 eucalyptus species and hybrids are known hosts.

Source: MPI *Surveillance Magazine*, June 2012 (in press) <http://bit.ly/Jh3A0y>



Bronze bug adults and eggs

IN THE NEWS

MANY BENEFITS FROM WAIRARAPA LOG TRAINS



Wairarapa logs hear that lonesome whistle blow

During March, the late night rumble of log trains became a regular event on the rail line from Masterton to Wellington.

This follows the creation of an ‘inland port’ at Waingawa on the southern outskirts of Masterton by KiwiRail in association with Centreport (the Wellington port company) and C3, a company that manages the logistics associated with the freighting and export of logs.

All the trains to date have carried logs supplied by Forest Enterprises Limited (FEL) and exported by Rayonier. March shipments totalled 5580 tonnes made up of 18 train loads, or rakes. The mean load of 310 tonnes is a little more than the equivalent of 10 log trucks.

FEL general manager forestry Bert Hughes says rail is cheaper than road, reduces the pressure on the congested Rimutaka Hill and means fewer log trucks need to pass through urban areas on the way to port.

“Rail also reduces the industry’s exposure to fossil fuel price increases as fuel is a lower proportion of rail freight costs than it is with road freight. It also reduces our carbon footprint.”

For Centreport, the use of trains reduces congestion during the loading of ships and relieves pressure on log storage yards at the port and at Seaview, Lower Hutt. There is also the potential to run log trains to the Port of Napier, as the cost of rail freight to Napier is much less than using road.

FORESTWOOD IMPRESSES

A successful ForestWood 2012 – the third such event – was held at Te Papa, Wellington, on World Forestry Day 21 March. It was hosted by the FOA and other major industry organisations.

Richard Phillips, one of two international keynote speakers, spoke about the global dynamics of the forest products industry. The other international speaker, Andrew Goodison, explained the strategy that’s transforming the Canadian forest industry and how it could be applied here.

Bruce Easton gave an in-depth analysis of the Chinese market. The potential for New Zealand wood to play a role in the Christchurch rebuild was covered by University of Canterbury associate professor Stefano Pampanin and University of Auckland professor Pierre Quenneville.

With 243 attendees, 15 trade stands and 130 at the Conference dinner, the event met organisers’ expectations. Presentations are available from www.forestwood.org.nz

FOREST ROADING BIBLE OUT



A bright new edition of the *Forest Road Engineering Manual* has been published by the FOA. It is based on the *Forest Road Engineering Manual* first published in 1999 by the former Logging Industry Research Association (LIRA).

The manual and an associated *Operators Guide* will be formally launched later this year. After the launch, FOA members will be sent a free copy of the guide. They have already been sent a copy of the manual.

Both publications are the result of a great many hours of unpaid work by editor Brett Gilmore, with support from Glen Mackie and Kelvin Meredith of the project team. Technical reviewers were Gilmore, Trevor Butler, Simon Fairbrother, Rien Visser and Peter Weir.

NZ Fish and Game nominated the manual for a Ministry for the Environment Greenribbon Award in the categories ‘Caring for our Water’ and ‘Communication and Education’. This is a welcome compliment from a group directly affected by forest operations.

Additional copies of the manual can be ordered from FOA for \$100 plus GST, or a pdf copy downloaded for free from the FOA website. A price has yet to be set for the *Operators Guide*.