

SLOW DOWN TO PROTECT OUR RURAL KIDS

FOREST OWNERS STRONGLY SUPPORT AN INITIATIVE DESIGNED TO MAKE RURAL DRIVERS SLOW DOWN TO 20 KPH WHEN PASSING A SCHOOL BUS THAT'S STOPPED TO LET CHILDREN ON OR OFF.



A Philip Wareing log truck observes the law when passing a stationary school bus
Illuminated 20 km/h signs may become mandatory nationwide, depending on the results of an Ashburton trial

The initiative, which goes under the slogan of *Either Way its 20k* has been trialled in Ashburton District since May.

“With one unfortunate exception, log trucks have not featured in school bus accidents, but we are part of the rural community. Many of us who work in the forest industry have children at rural schools,” says local FOA member Mark Grover, who has liaised with the organisers on behalf of the association.

“Local log transporter Murray Lumsden of Philip Wareing Limited had input into the research and the FOA is now helping with building awareness.”

The trial is an initiative of the NZ Transport Agency (NZTA), Rural Women, Transport Engineering Research (TERNZ) and Pearsons Coachlines, which has the school bus contract in the district. The Road Safety Trust and NZTA are funding the project.

The steering group also includes Ashburton District Council, the Ministries of Education and Transport, Police and the Principals’ Federation.

Lucy Cotterill, a researcher with Mackie Research that is coordinating the research on behalf of TERNZ, says there have been four phases to the project.

Baseline measurements included speed measurement and a survey of drivers. These revealed that 35 per cent of drivers did not know 20 km/h was the legal speed limit when passing a stationary school bus, and very few said they slowed right down. This was confirmed by bus drivers who reported that fewer than one in 20 drivers slowed down.

“In June there was a concerted effort to raise driver awareness, with drivers in the Ashburton district bombarded with the *Either Way its 20k* message through billboards, posters, print ads and wide media coverage. The *Either Way* part of the message refers to the fact that drivers on both sides of the road must slow for a stopping school bus,” Cotterill says.

In August, the fronts and backs of 30 Pearsons’ school buses in mid-Canterbury were fitted with illuminated flashing 20 km/h signs to alert other motorists to their legal obligations. These LED signs are

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highly visible when illuminated.

Legally the 20 km/h speed restriction applies only when a school bus has stopped, but in the trial bus drivers have been allowed to illuminate the signs for up to 20 seconds before and after their buses stop to drop-off or pick up school children.

Since October, the trial has moved into the enforcement phase, with police actively monitoring traffic speeds on school bus routes.

Cotterill says the main monitoring and data collection phase of the trial ends with the school year, but some further measurements will be made early in the 2014 school year to make sure the signs are still effective. The research results will then be analysed and a report delivered to NZTA and the Ministry of Education by June for decision-making.

If the results are convincing enough, installation of the signs may be made mandatory for schools throughout New Zealand. In the meantime, log truck drivers are being reminded to observe the *Either Way its 20k* message.

Grover says 23 school children have been killed in New Zealand in the last 25 years when crossing the road to or from school buses, and another 47 have been seriously injured.

“Preventing any further deaths or injuries to children is a priority for all rural communities and the Forest Owners Association wants to play its part by helping raise the awareness of drivers of log-trucks and other industry vehicles.”



WELCOME TO THE NEW ORDER

THIS EDITION WILL COME OUT AS A FRESHLY ELECTED FOREST GROWERS LEVY TRUST BOARD SITS DOWN TO WEIGH UP ITS RESPONSIBILITIES TO FOREST GROWING COMMODITY LEVY PAYERS.

It's a change that many have waited to see for a long time but, as always, this sort of change is accompanied by a multitude of expectations about what it means. These are my perspectives on what is literally a new order.

First, I hope it is merely another milestone along the road to better industry coordination and representation. The levy approved by Cabinet at the end of November means a voluntary funding model that was well-supported by many growers is being replaced with a compulsory funding model, paid over time by all growers to benefit all growers.

There still remains the opportunity to complement this with a wood processors' levy on a different commodity. This would provide the whole industry with an enhanced ability to strategically plan and make longer-term commitments to industry-good programmes in the way that growers are now able to do.

Forest growers are not an homogenous bunch of owners managing farm-sized operations. We come in many forms – multi-age class large foresters; single-age class small block owners, some nearing harvest and others decades from felling; radiata lovers; radiata loathers; city investors; rural tree farmers; noisy ones; quiet ones and so on.

The levy proposal put to growers for approval reflects how unique our industry is. Importantly, unlike farming and horticulture which operate on an annual cycle, we have a product that is delivered once every 30 years.

These characteristics have led to a levy and

a voting system that is unique, but the overwhelming yes vote for implementation says the right balance has been found.

Owners of both large and small forests will assess the value of the levy over the next six years. Both have the ability to bring the experiment to an end, but the differences in views and priorities between these groups are vastly outweighed by their common interests. This is why the Farm Forestry Association (FFA) and the Forest Owners Association (FOA) have been able to move the levy forward together and why we will continue to manage the process for the Levy Trust in the future.

Early consultation provided some good guidance. Members of FOA and FFA wanted their associations to continue, no-one wanted an additional level of bureaucracy, but levy governance had to be separate from the associations. As a result the independently elected Levy Trust has ultimate approval of what is collected and how it is distributed. Delivery of the approved programmes is via FOA and FFA.

The extensive overlaps at board and committee level between these two organisations makes for easy communication and co-ordination. But to ensure there is a pan-industry focus to all their work the FOA and FFA are reviewing the focus of their committees.

Both organisations will continue to offer voluntary membership via a modest fee to deliver activities that are either not funded, or cannot be funded, from the levy. This also provides representation for forest growers who will not be levy payers for the next six years.

The levy has been set at a rate that allows most current industry-good activities to be adequately funded. On the other hand, the levy will not raise enough money to cover all the activities forest growers would like done, and it never will.

Hands will have to go into pockets a second time for some projects and programmes. Research is the most obvious area for this, but forest health surveillance could be another where additional coverage beyond the national programme is wanted.

The process of establishing a levy has, in my view, been very positive for the industry and its participants. Thanks are due to the establishment board for co-ordinating a complex process that has had such a successful outcome, as well as to the newly elected board for their commitment to the task ahead.

All forest growers have been given the opportunity to have their say. Our research structures and programmes have been reviewed, along with many other industry programmes.

There is a sense that forest growers have a clearer picture of where their industry is heading and what its priorities should be – priorities which are now largely funded by all for the benefit of all. That's got to be a good thing.

SEASONS GREETINGS

The FOA president, board and staff wish all forest owners and friends a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

To those who have lost family members or workmates in workplace accidents this year we extend our deepest condolences. While we cannot go back in time and prevent these accidents from occurring, we can all work together to prevent future accidents. That will be our priority in 2014.

The FOA Wellington office closes on Friday 20 December and reopens for business on Monday 6 January.



Some research will continue to be voluntarily funded

GETTING ON WITH FOLKS

IT'S EASY TO GET CHEESED OFF WITH WHAT THE NEIGHBOURS GET UP TO. BUT IN MOST CASES THE REMEDY IS EQUALLY EASY – BETTER COMMUNICATIONS.



Sally Strang chats to a forest neighbour, Kinleith farmer Peter Wayne
Better communication will prevent many disputes between neighbours

After a series of tense skirmishes in the RMA trenches over the years, forest owners and farmers decided during the review of the Ruapehu District Plan that they'd be better off solving boundary issues face-to-face rather than in the Environmental Court.

Thanks to the efforts of the FOA environmental committee member Sally Strang, the Feds' Ruapehu provincial president Lyn Neeson and Jackie Egan of NZ Forest Managers, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed by Federated Farmers and the Forest Owners and Farm Forestry Associations.

"Particularly contentious in Ruapehu were rules regarding plantation forest setbacks from farm boundaries, with farmer representatives seeking a blanket 25 metre setback, as against foresters who typically replant 7-8 m from the boundary," says Strang.

The MoU compromises with a 10 m plant and replant setback for forest growers, based on scientific evidence that shows

pine tree growth typically impacts on pasture out to around 10 m from the stumpline.

"A key issue for farmers was knowing who to contact if a tree or branch falls across a fenceline, or if weeds and pests on forest land become a problem. This is of particular concern in districts like Ruapehu where the forest managers may be based outside the region. Not knowing who to contact can be extremely frustrating," she says.

"Hopefully a simple thing like circulating a map showing forest owners and their contact details to Federated Farmers branches around the country will make it easier for farmers to contact their forest owning neighbours. This in turn should result in better communication and more timely resolution of boundary issues.

"Because forest managers are responsible for many kilometres of boundaries and make only infrequent visits to forests during the growing phase, they are inevitably reliant on neighbours to let them

know if there is an issue."

Strang says she, Neeson and Egan set out originally to produce some practical guidelines for forest managers and farmers in the Ruapehu District. But as the document developed, the head offices of Federated Farmers and FOA became involved and it was agreed there was benefit in extending it to become a national agreement that also included the Farm Forestry Association.

While the MoU covers a wide range of topics, it really boils down to effective and timely communication processes – so that farmers and foresters can manage their operations while minimising the impact of disruptions and unnecessary frustrations on both sides of the fence.

It covers six key areas: general communications; boundary fence issues; plant and animal pests; planting and replanting setbacks and agricultural application.

Federated Farmers Forestry spokesperson Anders Crofoot says the MoU provides for dialogue on land management practices including organics. Since organics precludes the use of many commonly used agriculturals, the aim is to bring both parties together to reach common ground.

"Outside of organic farms, another thing the MoU looks to resolve is the aerial application of agriculturals, which is beneficial to both conventional farming and forestry. The MoU is about taking all reasonable and practical precautions to avoid overspray and where this does occur, reasonable steps to resolve and remedy any damage," he says.

While the MoU is not legally binding, the mutual expectation is that its provisions will become an industry norm. If it is adopted as a template for managing farm-forest boundary issues in District Plans around the country, Strang says it will hopefully reduce time and money wasting re-litigation of this issue.

For a copy of the MoU, see 'Agreements & Accords' on www.nzfoa.org.nz

UNIQUE COLLECTION SYSTEM IN PLACE

THE COLLECTION SYSTEM FOR THE NEW FOREST LEVY IS TESTED AND READY TO GO.



The levy is payable by the owner of the logs just before they pass through the mill gate or when they arrive on the wharf

The process has been designed to be efficient and to ensure log buyers' sales figures remain confidential. The architect of the system is Integral Limited, a New Zealand-owned business software provider with many existing clients in the forest industry. Recently the company bought Scion's business software arm Atlas.

FOA senior policy analyst Glen Mackie, who has liaised with Integral on behalf of the Levy Trust, says a company set up by Integral will collect the levy on behalf of the Trust.

"There is no desire by anyone in the industry to create a new bureaucracy. By contracting out levy collection we keep costs down – about 3 per cent of the levy will go in collection costs – and maintain a confidentiality wall between log buyers and the Trust."

Starting in January, the forest growers commodity levy will be billed to the owners of logs and other forest products just before they cross the mill gate threshold, or just after they pass through the wharf gate. Marshalling companies and mills will supply the data to enable invoices to be generated.

Payments from product owners will go into a bank clearing account and be forwarded to the Forest Growers Levy Trust within two months of logs leaving a forest.

Anthony Ham, one of the company's three executive directors, says Integral is providing all data suppliers with a very simple, narrow, file specification. This can be easily patched into any accounting programme, so the data needed by Integral to bill the product owner for the levy can be

provided without hassle at the end of the month.

"Simplicity means there is less to go wrong and minimal cost. If mills don't want to make any changes they can simply paste the information we want in a spreadsheet and email it to us."

Ham says the levy data belongs to the Trust, but it won't be able to see it. Levy invoices will be sent out by the levy company set up by Integral, based on data supplied by mills and marshalling companies. When the invoices are paid, the money will go into a clearing account which the Trust doesn't have access to, with transfers of funds going to the Trust as soon as they are cleared.

Integral operates in 'the cloud' and backs up its files on the ground. This, together with encryption, means that the Trust's data is safe and secure. Levy Trust auditors will keep everyone honest.

From January, marshalling companies and buyers of logs and other forest products will need to keep records of their monthly deliveries from growers. By the 15th of each month, they will be required by law to tell the levy company the weight or volume of commodity they received the previous month. On the 17th, the product owners will be levied at the agreed rate, currently 27c/tonne. This is payable by the end of the month.

Since the middle of December, Integral has been asking log buyers to send in sample data to test the system, so both parties are happy with how everything works. This opportunity follows rigorous testing by marshalling companies and mills during October and November.

INDUSTRY STALWARTS VOTED IN



Forest Growers Levy Trust chair Geoff Thompson

The six successful candidates elected to the board of the Forest Growers Levy Trust are well known in the industry and include the presidents or chairs of the FOA, FFA and Wood Council.

Voted in by those owning eligible plantations of 1,000 or more hectares in area were: David Balfour, Bill McCallum, Paul Nicholls and Philip Taylor. In the under 1,000 ha category Ian Jackson and Steve Wilton were successful. Six candidates had been nominated for the former category and eight for the latter.

The elections were conducted by Research New Zealand on behalf of the Trust, with polls open from 5-22 November. Twenty-

eight owners/forest entities voted in the over 1,000 ha category and 338 voted in the under 1,000 ha category.

After voting closed, Research New Zealand contacted all voters to confirm that they met the eligibility criteria, that they had in fact voted; who they had cast their votes for; and for those in the over-1,000 ha category to confirm their net forest production for the 2013 calendar year.

At its first meeting, the elected board selected a seventh independent board member, Geoff Thompson, and elected him as chair. Thompson served as the interim chair and thus provides continuity between the establishment and elected boards.

PRIORITIES FOR LEVY FUNDING AGREED

SOME HARD CALLS HAVE HAD TO BE MADE ABOUT THE PROJECTS THAT WILL – AND WON'T – BE FUNDED BY THE NEW FOREST COMMODITY LEVY.

The winners are the two big projects being jointly funded by the government (see page 7) on sustainable intensification and

phytophthora, plus forest health, diverse species and fire protection studies.

The 2014 budget for these is \$3.04 million.

Genomics, steep country harvesting, several weed control projects and biological control of paropsis in *Eucalyptus nitens* failed to make the cut. These would have cost a further \$1.24 million

The final decision was made by the interim board of the Forest Growers Levy Trust on the recommendation of the FOA Research Committee, endorsed by the Farm Forestry (FFA) and Forest Owners (FOA) boards.

The interim Trust board tried to avoid making decisions that would bind the elected board. But with existing funding arrangements coming to an end, growers needed to provide commitment and assurance to the researchers involved.



Voluntary funding has been secured for steepland harvesting

While technically the elected Board has the power to amend the recommendation, this is considered unlikely given the broad level of consensus.

FOA chief executive David Rhodes says hard calls had to be made because of limits on the funds available.

“Some projects that missed the cut have real merit. In particular, the genomics and steep country harvesting proposals would have been supported if the budget was available. Fortunately a group of forest owners and other stakeholders

have agreed to voluntarily contribute funding to steepland harvesting research.”

Some other projects that have not been granted levy funding may also be funded by consortiums of growers for whom a project is particularly important. When the levy rate was calculated, it was envisaged that an industry tradition of voluntary funding of selected projects would continue.

WHO NOW CALLS THE SHOTS?

Russell Dale, the chief executive officer of Future Forests Research, has been hired to handle the forest growing industry's research portfolio.

He will work alongside a new Forest Growers Research Advisory Committee, made up of FOA and FFA representatives and some independent experts. The chair of the committee, David Balfour, will report to the FOA and FFA boards and ultimately to the Forest Growers Levy Trust Board.

The establishment of the new advisory committee closes the door for Future Forests Research, a voluntarily-funded organisation that has managed most major forest growing research projects since it was set up in 2007.



FFR is being wound down after six very productive years

FFR has stewarded many valuable research projects for growers in the last six years. For a copy of the 2013 Annual Report that summarises many of these, email futureforestsresearch@ffr.co.nz, or go to www.ffr.co.nz

EUC BEETLES CORNERED

An outbreak of eucalyptus leaf beetles in Whitemans Valley, Upper Hutt, may have been successfully eradicated.

Native to Australia, the beetle is one of several pests of eucalyptus trees that has invaded other countries in recent years. In Australia, where it is commonly known as a eucalyptus tortoise beetle, it is an outbreak pest of commercial blue gum plantations.

If it became established in New Zealand it could become a serious pest, causing damage to ornamental eucalypts and economic losses in commercial plantations.

Soon after the beetle was discovered in Whitemans Valley in late 2012, the Ministry for Primary Industries determined that the beetles had not spread from the small site where they were originally detected. The ministry then embarked on an eradication strategy.

The area was sprayed with Dominex insecticide by helicopter twice in the autumn, followed by ground treatment to target the pupal stage. Regular spraying occurred through spring and will continue over summer. Recent inspection of the trees indicated the aerial spraying had been highly effective.

Surveillance of the area will continue for at least the next two years to ensure eradication has been successful, says MPI's Paul Stevens.

Adult eucalyptus leaf beetles are about 1 cm long, dark brown or black with large red spots. Larvae are about 0.4 - 0.8 cm long, yellow and brown with long black hairs.



Eucalyptus leaf beetles

INDEPENDENT INSIGHT NEEDED

THE FOA HOPES TO ANNOUNCE AN INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO FOREST WORKPLACE SAFETY EARLY IN THE NEW YEAR.

FOA president Paul Nicholls says draft terms of reference have been agreed with all the major players, with only one or two points to be finalised. It is expected to get underway this summer, or as soon as the inquiry team can be assembled.

“We all agree that forest fatalities are at a totally unacceptable level. The inquiry is needed so that workers and their families are confident that no stone is being left unturned in our efforts to create a safe workplace,” he says.

“I am confident that if employers, workers, ACC and the government’s enforcement agencies all play their part, we will get very close to our goal of zero fatalities and serious harm injuries. However, we continue to have occasional serious harm incidents even in our best-run operations, so I am hoping that the inquiry will identify shortcomings in our safety systems that we are not aware of.”

The most hazardous forest operations are tree falling and breaking out. In 2009 the harvest was 20 million m³. This year it will be just over 29.5 million m³ – a 47% increase in just five years, much of it on steep hills where the hazards are greatest.

For more than three years the FOA has

been developing initiatives to make harvesting safer. Two of these, *Building a Safety Culture* and a best practice guideline (BPG) and certification programme for breaking out, have already been deployed by several FOA members. Their roll out to all forest owners can go ahead as soon as promised funding from ACC comes through.

FOA members, along with the government, have also invested heavily in mechanised steep country harvesting systems that remove workers from the areas of greatest

risk. These systems have great potential and some are in commercial use, but more research and development is needed before they can be widely deployed.

“Our next priority is the development of tree faller certification,” says Nicholls. Another initiative that needs ACC support is contractor certification. This would recognise contractors who are assessed as meeting or exceeding industry safety standards. Certification, backed by audit, would help forest owners identify contractors who meet the highest standards. It would also enable regulators to focus enforcement on the area of greatest need – uncertified operators.

Of particular concern is the disproportionate number of fatalities occurring in small forests and woodlots. These forests, which produce just 20% of the harvest, are responsible for at least 50% of the fatalities. This group is extremely diverse, with a range of forestry experience and knowledge of safe work practice.



It is essential to have properly trained staff

Since the owners of many of these forests do not belong to the FOA or Farm Forestry Association, which have high safety expectations of their members, it is critically important that the firms that are harvesting

these blocks apply industry safety standards and use properly trained staff. Government regulatory agencies have a vital role to play in ensuring that this happens.

Nicholls urges all forest employers to ensure that all workers in their forests are complying with the *Approved Code of Practice*. “This – or an in-house equivalent – is mandatory. Failure to comply with the ACoP means you are not taking all practical steps to ensure the safety of your workforce and that’s legally and morally unacceptable.”

GIVE US A PRICE

The FOA is disappointed that the government has failed to indicate what it thinks would be an acceptable price for carbon after New Zealand withdraws from the Kyoto Protocol in 2015.

In an announcement in early December acting climate change minister Simon Bridges said NZ Units (NZUs) would be the only units emitters could use from June 2015. He also confirmed that the government would auction NZUs to regulate supply and hence price.

“Mr Bridges said he wanted to bring certainty to participants in the ETS. But he gave no indication of the NZU price at which auctioning would be used,” says association vice-president Peter Clark.

“This has left emitters and foresters uncertain and unwilling to take action. Without a meaningful carbon price, new planting will remain at extremely low levels and deforestation on land with dairying potential will continue apace.”

Mr Clark says emitters will be able to continue to use dodgy cheap international credits to meet their obligations until May 2015. Because huge quantities of these units are available, NZUs are languishing at around the \$4 mark, well below the level at which anyone would consider factoring carbon revenues into their decision-making.

“Ever since this government took office forest owners have been asking for a carbon floor price to match the current ceiling price and for the removal of the one-for-two taxpayer subsidy for emitters. We and other participants need to know the government is committed to carbon prices being in a band that provides us with an incentive to invest in carbon reduction.”

In November iwi leaders met with the prime minister and asked for a carbon price mechanism that better balances the interests of emitters with those who have the ability to invest in measures to reduce emissions. The FOA wrote to the prime minister in support of the iwi submissions.

“We said a higher carbon price will lead to increased forest planting. This would give greater security of supply to domestic processors, increase primary sector diversification and resilience to adverse economic and environmental events,” says Mr Clark.

“Given that the maximum price has already been passed on to consumers by power companies and fuel suppliers, a meaningful floor price is unlikely to have a significant impact on costs to household consumers.”

RESEARCH

BOOSTING PRODUCTIVITY, WHACKING PHYTOPHTHORA

THE GOVERNMENT IS INVESTING MORE THAN \$30 MILLION IN TWO MAJOR SCION-LED RESEARCH PROGRAMMES OF DIRECT BENEFIT TO FOREST OWNERS.

One aims to increase forest productivity in a sustainable way and the other to protect trees from phytophthora diseases. Forest owners, through the new commodity levy will contribute \$9 million to the first and \$2.4 m to the second over six years.

In addition, \$11.25 m over six years is being invested by government in research into biopolymers, including bioresins and biofoams, to help exporters respond to the growing global demand for products with renewable content. Scion is also a partner in this work.

In the government's 2013 science investment round an investment of \$278 million was made across all sectors.

"Overall, given that the funding round was heavily oversubscribed, \$30 million is a good outcome for forestry as well as for Scion," says FOA chief executive David Rhodes.

"It was disappointing that a bid for funding research into emerging species was turned down. We are now considering alternative sources of funding for this research as a matter of urgency."

Sustainable productivity

The productivity programme, *Growing confidence in forestry's future*, will take a precision approach to growing radiata and involve a government investment of \$20.25 million over six years.

The big picture aim is to provide growers with the knowledge they need to produce an assured supply of high quality wood in the future.

The research team will integrate the latest advances in sensor technology, tree physiology, genetics and forest ecology to build a better understanding of how managers may increase the productivity of existing plantation forests in a sustainable way.

This will involve studying the interaction between tree genetics and growing sites, in order to identify why certain trees are doing better in certain locations. Longer term, it will enable superior trees – both in terms of productivity and wood properties – to be selected for planting.



Dr Peter Clinton

Research objective is to double the productivity of future forests

Specific aims include:

- Doubling biological productivity of future forests while improving wood quality and consistency, and
- Ensuring that NZ's forest products can be sold into key international markets by demonstrating that intensified forest management practices are environmentally and socially sustainable.

The research team will be led by Dr Peter Clinton, and supported by New Zealand and international experts, and university, CRI and industry sub-contractors. Cash co-funding of \$1.6 million and in-kind co-funding of \$2 m will be provided each year by forest owners.

Phytophthora

The phytophthora research, *Prosperity from trees: protection from current and future disease*, will be funded by the government to the tune of \$10.05 million over six years. It will see New Zealand

become a world leader in the management of phytophthora diseases in trees.

For forest owners, the most urgent target is red needle cast (RNC) – a condition that is reducing radiata productivity in several North Island locations. But to many New Zealanders a greater concern is kauri dieback, a phytophthora disease that is killing thousands of kauri in conservation forests in the Far North. For apple growers, the concerns are collar and crown rots.

Phytophthora – the word means plant destroyer in Greek – causes huge plant losses worldwide: the most notorious of these, *Phytophthora infestans*, caused the Irish potato famine. With more than 120 phytophthora species known worldwide, they pose a huge biosecurity risk due to the range of plants they affect, their rapid global spread, sweeping impacts and high costs of management.

This project will build the fundamental knowledge of phytophthora diseases, with the aim of protecting New Zealand's trees through improved disease resistance and disease management. A key part of that is building an understanding of how trees defend themselves against phytophthora attack.

"Using new technologies, the Scion-led team should be able to find out why some radiata are resistant to RNC, while others aren't. And anything we learn from one tree species is likely to be applicable to others," says Rhodes.

"It is critical that New Zealand's capacity to respond to current and emerging phytophthora threats is amped up. There are nasties out there that would pose a major threat to the viability of plantation forestry if they became established here."



Spore bearing structures of *Phytophthora kernoviae*

Finding ways to deal with Phytophthora pathogens is vital to the health of our plantation forests, orchards and native species

NEWS IN BRIEF

LEVY SET AT 27C/TONNE

In November, associate minister for primary industries Jo Goodhew announced a 27c/tonne levy on all harvested wood material from New Zealand plantation forests during 2014. This is expected to raise more than \$6.5 million during the year.

“The levy per tonne is only small, but when it is multiplied across the millions of logs our growers produce each year, we will be able to fund work that directly benefits all growers and indirectly, all New Zealanders,” says Forest Growers Levy Trust chair Geoff Thompson.

Forest Owners Association president Paul Nicholls says getting the levy to this point has involved a huge amount of behind-the-scenes work.

“The time and energy that has gone into this reflects the wish of most growers to have a more cohesive industry where everyone can have their say and everyone pays their fair share for activities that benefit us all.”

For more details about the levy, see pages 2 and 4.

REGISTER FOR FORESTWOOD 2014

Early-bird registration is now open for the Forestwood 2014 conference, being held at Te Papa, Wellington on Wednesday 19 March. The conference theme is the “Green Green Growth of Home”.

ForestWood 2014 will enable you to hear in election year the views of the main political parties on how they expect to influence New Zealand’s forest growing and wood processing/manufacturing businesses in pursuit of increased economic growth.

For more: www.forestwood.org.nz

AUSTRALIAN STANDARD FOR KIWI FORESTS?



Aussie rules, but no Aussie roos, may be found in our forests

Standards New Zealand has formed a technical committee to consider whether the Australian Standard for sustainable forest management (AS4708) can be adopted as a New Zealand National Standard. A public consultation round ended on 22 October and the technical committee is now considering the submissions.

This follows introduction of legislation in

Australia that will require wood manufacturers and importers to demonstrate that their timber supply comes from sustainably and legally logged sources.

For NZ exporters, FSC and PEFC certification are designed to achieve this, as will compliance with AS4708. Hence the decision by the Wood Processors Association to ask Standards NZ to consider its adoption here.

If the technical committee supports the proposal and AS4708 is adopted on this side of the Tasman, forest managers will be able to seek certification against the standard through an independent certification body accredited by the Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand (JAS-ANZ).

Australian Forestry Standard Ltd (AFSL) has been working with NZ stakeholders to evaluate the potential for expanding the Australian Forest Certification Scheme and PEFC endorsement to cover New Zealand.

BIG CHANGES ON FOA BOARD

At its 2013 Annual Meeting the FOA ushered in a new-look board.

President Bill McCallum, after two years in the role, stepped aside in favour of his deputy, Paul Nicholls. Heavy hitters Brian Pritchard and Charles Schell retired and were replaced by the new Crown Forestry general manager Warwick Foran and Summit Northern



New FOA president Paul Nicholls

Plantation forest manager John Robinson. Pritchard and Schell have been familiar faces on the FOA board for many years, with Pritchard making a huge contribution to the transport portfolio. Under his stewardship, 22 metre low-centre-of-gravity rigs were introduced, greatly reducing the number of highway rollovers. He also helped the FOA lobby for high productivity vehicles and, following their introduction, geed-up those officials who were dragging their heels on the approval of routes for these rigs.

Schell’s career dates back to the NZ Forest Service, culminating in his role as Crown Forestry general manager, a position he held until his retirement earlier this year. He brought to the FOA board a wealth of institutional knowledge as well as a high level of financial and political acumen.

2013/2014 FOA office holders:

President: Paul Nicholls
Vice President: Peter Clark
Chair Fire Committee: Grant Dodson
Chair Forest Biosecurity Committee: Dave Cormack
Chair Health, Safety & Training Committee: Sheldon Drummond
Chair Forest Resources & Environment Committee: Peter Weir
Chair Promotions & Membership Committee: Paul Nicholls
Chair Research Advisory Committee: David Balfour
Chair Transportation Committee: John Robinson