

2007 shaping up as an exciting year

President's comments

Happy New Year! 2007 is shaping up to be an exciting year for forestry. There will be many opportunities and the Institute needs to be well positioned to make the most of them.

1. Climate change policy consultation - get involved!

Just before Christmas we issued a media statement about the recently released Sustainable Land Management and Climate Change - Discussion Document. We concluded by saying that:

"Forests are an essential part of the contribution that New Zealand can make to ameliorating global climate change. We urgently need policies put in place that encourage commercial forestry, including the domestic use of wood and other forest products and that recognise the contribution that forests and forest owners make to the economic, environmental and social life of our country. The discussion paper is a step on the way and we look forward to working with government to develop and expand on the options that it has presented to us."

The Institute has organised a number of section meetings in February and March to discuss the climate change policy and help us prepare our submission. I encourage you to read the discussion document and take part in the workshops. We are seeking new ideas particularly on Pillar 2: Reducing emissions and creating carbon sinks and the linkages to both the energy and transport policies. Our submission is due on 31 March 2007.

Please contact MAF if you want a printed copy, or read it on line at: <http://www.maf.govt.nz/mafnet/publications/maf-policy-news/issue1-december-06.htm>

2. Opportunities for forestry

The sea change in the public attitude towards climate change provides opportunities for the forestry sector. The article in this week's Listener entitled "Will the war on climate change kill our trade and tourism?" has quotes such as "NZ producers should be asking themselves if they're in the right business". This confirms to me that we need to take action for three reasons:

1. Political reality - the government is acting as if climate change is happening in keeping with the current international thinking
2. Commercial reality - insurance companies are altering their premiums based on adverse climatic events and investors are looking at the carbon profile of companies
3. Trading reality - food miles and product miles could be seriously damaging for New Zealand, a country dependent on its exports and tourism.

The Listener article also gave ideas on what individuals could do to reduce their carbon footprint.

3. Things that change

Last week I walked into the Sylvia Park Foodtown in Auckland and noticed large format advertising for the

Wa\$ted TV3 programme stating that "65% of your waste can be recycled". In 2002 and 2003 during the launch of the NZ Waste strategy and the Reduce Your Rubbish campaign, we would have given our eye teeth to have this kind of backing from a prime time TV series. But the timing was not right.

TV3 and their collaborators, including Landcare Research's and their CarboNZero and EBEX21 schemes, have developed a hard hitting series. In the first series an Auckland family were encouraged to take the train, recycle, not use disposable nappies, no drier and start a worm farm! This was translated into the carbon footprint of the family - before and after. With slick graphics and financial incentives the message was clear - you need to change behaviour.

I spend a lot of time working for the behaviour change in our homes, our offices and business and from the government as a whole.

The Wa\$ted TV series is a clear indication that the time is now right for the messages to be heard "out there".

4. Who will do the tree planting?

Climate change policy requires tree planting for carbon sequestration and to provide a carbon neutral energy and transport fuel. With the current policy options on the table, as set out in the Sustainable Land Management and Climate Change - Discussion Document, the commercial investors are saying they need certainty to buy land and plant trees and reassurance they will not be locked into a landuse.

So who owns the landbank that could be planted in trees? The answer is Maori and farmers. But for these landowners to want to plant trees they need two things, the same certainty and the also sufficient incentives to make the behaviour change to plant trees.

Landowners make landuse choices that are comfortable for them. Not everybody wants to farm deer, and others feel the same way about trees. So how do we encourage them to make this change?

Farm foresters, through the NZ Farm Forestry Association, have been "converting" farmers for generations. Over the last 10 years I've written 2 reports on sustainable land management for the Ministry's of Agriculture and Forestry and the Environment. Not much has changed over this time in terms of encouraging a behaviour change towards planting trees.

In my view the farm forestry model needs to be strengthened in order to increase tree planting. It is a proven model and acknowledges that behaviour change is a slow process. People need time, lots of information and hand holding. This is where the NZ Farm Forestry Associations field days come in because there are plenty of demonstration farms that show how wise land use choices can be made and a number of land uses integrated on the same farm.

5. Support the NZ Farm Forestry Association [NZFFA]

If I wanted more planting I would put more funds into the NZFFA national and branch system. This system will provide information and support as well as "non

government" assistance. Most importantly it will provide the inspiration to get more trees in the ground.

6. The New Zealand Institute of Forestry - our role

At the recent section meetings some excellent ideas and viable options outside Pillar 2 have been put forward by members. As the body representing forestry professionals, not forest owners or land owners, the NZIF Council has to think carefully about the role it wants the NZIF to play in this debate. The section meetings have instructed us to be professional and independent.

Earlier in the week the NZIF met with forest owner and farm forester representatives to work towards a forestry sector view. The key messages were equity, flexibility, certainty and simplicity and a strong desire for

the environmental benefits of forestry to be recognised. Forestry is the solution, not the problem. Forestry has been painted in a bad light and the average citizen is unaware of the contribution that forestry makes to our economy and our environment.

I welcome the opportunity for the Institute to take part in the forWood promotional programme to increase public support for the forestry industry and boost the consumption of wood.

The forestry industry needs to get on the front foot fast.

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letters

Impact factor

Sir

In the February issue (2006), Hamish Levack proposed letting the weekly Newsletter absorb the NZJF. I have no objections to putting refereed scientific articles on the web soon after acceptance as this is already standard practice for a few journals. However, I would hate to see the hard copy issues replaced by an electronic Newsletter just to save money (the journal requires about 18% of NZIF expenses). Call me "old-school," but I enjoy reading the NZJF four times a year and keep back issues on my shelf. In contrast, I cannot locate any of the electronic newsletters (on my computer) that are older than August 2004. Although I enjoy occasionally reading the electronic Newsletter, I would hate to see the end of a 50-year tradition. We have recently witnessed the last issue of the South African Forestry Journal (SAFJ) and I think it would be unfortunate to see that repeated with the NZJF.

One of the reasons given for SAFJ ceasing publication (after 68 years) was a decline in the number of manuscripts submitted from leading scientists. Many authors were bypassing the journal and opting for one of the 36 forestry journals listed in the Journal Citation Report. This journal published several numerical rankings of journals such as "impact factor" and "immediacy index." The "impact factor" is a number that represents the average number of times a paper is cited during a 2-yr period. An "impact factor" of 2.0 means that, on average, a paper was cited twice (e.g. 160 cites/80 articles).

Twenty-two New Zealand journals are listed among the more than 6,000 journals monitored by Journal Citation Report but only North American and European forestry journals are their list. Therefore, just for fun, I used "Google Scholar" to calculate an "impact factor" for two NZ forestry journals. The NZJF ended up with 0.09 (i.e. 7/79) while the NZJFS value was 0.65 (i.e. 26/40). Out of 38 journals, this ranks NZJFS as 24th and NZJF last. Although the NZJF publishes only a handful of peer reviewed papers each year,

the editorials and commentaries count as "articles" and therefore lower the "impact factor." Simply eliminating the editorials and features (which I say make the journal enjoyable to read) would raise the "impact factor" to 0.13 (4/30).

For this reason, I want to raise a red flag in regards to the goal of increasing the NZJF's "impact factor." Actions taken to increase this number could alter the content and readership of the journal and might alter the future behavior of editors, reviewers and authors. In my opinion, less than 9% of NZIF members (ie. those of us who work at universities) are interested in the numerical ranking of journals. Many forest managers have little interest in subscribing to journals with high impact factors. Highly cited papers typically contain academic jargon and complex equations that only an academician would love. In contrast, I contend forest managers enjoy reading interesting papers that impact their profession (such as the case with articles about "millennium forestry.") However, these articles are rarely cited by professors. Therefore, an "impact factor" ranking of 1.9 does not mean the journal will have high impact on forest management. I believe journals with high impact factors are not found on most forest consultants' bookshelves. I bet most foresters and professors cannot even name the Journal Citation Report's top-ranked forestry journal - based on impact factor**.

On the other hand, university administrators, some government funding agencies and some professors are interested in the ranking of academic journals. Prior to 1989, they had to rely on subjective rankings to evaluate the performance of individuals and projects. Now objective rankings [published by the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI)] are used, in combination with publication numbers, to allocate research funds and salary increases. Sometimes these numbers are used to mislead administrators into thinking that the quality of a paper is similar to the "impact factor" of the host journal. Fortunately, many now realize that getting a forestry paper