

Stay vigilant, NZ forest owners warned

Massive forest and bush fires in Northland last month should be a warning to forest owners to remain vigilant, says NZFOA Fire Committee chair, Kerry Ellem.

Two separate fires burned 220 ha of Juken Nissho's Aupouri Forest, and 40 ha of the adjacent crown-owned Onepu Forest near Kaitiāia last month, and fires ravaged more than 400 ha of conservation land in Kaimaumu.

"There is still a severe fire danger in many parts of the country, particularly in Northland, East Coast, Wairarapa and Manawatu. The top of the South Island and Canterbury are also at risk. Forest owners need to be on guard for at least another two months," he says.



Juken Nissho

Juken Nissho lost 220 ha of its Aupouri forest in two separate fires last month

The two fires in the 18,000 ha Aupouri Forest broke out within a week of each other, and Juken Nissho forest manager, Martin Abbott, says the outcome could have been a lot worse.

"Massive resources were on the scene quickly, and we had fire experts advising on the initial attack phases before getting the back-up systems working," he says.

"We were lucky the winds were pretty benign – if we had had strong winds, they could have potentially taken out 2,000 ha."

Ground crews of up to 60 people were used during each crew change to tackle the Aupouri and Onepu fires – which were both brought under control in less than two days of starting. Seven helicopters were also used, along with the six four-wheel drive fire engines that were needed to traverse the dry, sandy tracks that provided the only access to the fires.

Abbott says the relatively minor damage caused by the fires is a testament to the crews who did an "excellent job".

The upside from Australian fires

New Zealand fire fighters helping fight Australia's national park and forest fires in the State of Victoria gained valuable training they would never have got in New Zealand.

"The experience of large campaign fires like that is something they could only read about in books," says national rural fire officer, Murray Dudfield.

"We just haven't had that scale of fire in New Zealand. Our biggest fires are over within a couple of weeks."

However, Dudfield says that doesn't mean it couldn't happen, and the experience

gained in Victoria, and from the United States fires in Oregon last year, will be really valuable.

"Those fires are often started by lightning strikes, and are located some distance from infrastructures like towns and cities, so whole villages need to be set up to support the fire crews.

"Experiencing that first hand is better than

any training we could have offered in New Zealand," he says.

More than 60 New Zealand fire fighters were sent to help efforts in Victoria where 1.10 million ha of parks and forests have been lost to fire.

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In my view

Clear strategies needed

The recent forest fires in North Auckland – while small compared to those in Australia and the United States – serve to underline the ever present threat to our forest resource. The painted apple moth and, more recently, the discovery of a new infestation of the gum leaf skeletoniser (*Uraba lugens*) are similar reminders.

A major key to dealing effectively with these threats is preparation and planning. This involves a wide range of organisations and disciplines, including researchers, policy makers, administrators, service providers, trainers and industry personnel, working closely together on well developed and understood strategies.

This does not always occur as well as it should.


While fire prevention, control and research have generally enjoyed a coordinated approach over recent times, there has also been increased recognition of the need for shared and agreed objectives and strategies in dealing with forest pest and disease prevention and control.

The adoption of a national biosecurity strategy is hopefully nearing completion, and cooperation between the industry and researchers is increasing.

The message is clear. We have only limited resources and unless we use them effectively, our ability to protect our forest resource, both plantation and indigenous, will remain under a greater risk than it needs to be.

High tech industry

On a totally different note, the industry's focus has largely changed from a production emphasis to finding solutions to customers' needs. This has increased the range of skills and knowledge required. Forestry is more than ever a high technology industry requiring increased skills in marketing, product development, design, chemistry, logistics, financial management etc.

The industry provides an exciting and challenging career opportunity for our best and brightest. The industry needs to more effectively get this message to parents, teachers, careers advisors and, most importantly, the future workforce. A start has been made, but more is required. 

Energy

Problems with energy supply

Price increases, price volatility, and security of supply are the most serious issues facing manufacturers in the wood processing sector, according to the Wood Processing Strategy energy committee.

The committee, co-chaired by Ewan Gebbie from the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority, and Bruce Chapman, joint NZFOA/NZFC Environment Committee chair, painted a grave picture of the energy supply situation in its summary and recommendations to the WPS steering group in December.



Forest Research


According to the report, gas and coal prices could double over the next five to 10 years and electricity prices could rise by up to 60 per cent. Excessive and unmanageable volatility threatens existing operations and discourages new investment, and concerns over whether the market will deliver adequate security of supply are 'justified', the report said.

The main drivers behind the concerns are: the demise of the Maui gas field, the imposition of a carbon tax, inadequate regulation of gas transmission, delays in developing new gas fields caused by the RMA, electricity transmission constraints, dry year risk, and various changes in the structure of the electricity market which have reduced competitiveness.

"The Government is aware of most of these issues, and is working through some of them. We believe the Government's role is to ensure the market is competitive and informed, and that there are no barriers to investment," says Bruce Chapman.

The report gave a number of recommendations to Government in relation to security of supply, including establishing a strategic energy planning function within central government, and reducing RMA barriers to development.

Recommendations in relation to pricing and competition included requiring Transpower to remove transmission constraints, accelerate the establishment of the Electricity Governance Board, and to widen criteria for access to Negotiated Greenhouse Agreements for both new and existing investment.

For more information, contact Bruce Chapman, tel 09 262 6162 or email bruce.chapman@chh.co.nz. 

Better funding needed for better roads

New Zealand's current annual harvest from planted forests is equivalent to 740,000 truckloads – by 2013 that number is expected to be 1.1 million.

That means more trucks on public roads, an increased demand for logging trucks and drivers, and more trucks on roads in non-traditional regions like Northland, East Coast, Hawkes Bay, southern North Island and Marlborough.

One of the biggest concerns will be safety, and driver shortages will add to the problem. Younger, less experienced drivers will be shifting logs from tougher hill blocks along narrow, regional roads, says NZFOA Transportation Committee chair, Doug Robertson.

Speaking at the third annual New Zealand Land Transport Summit in Auckland last month, Robertson said there has been a clear improvement in the safety performance of logging trucks, due mainly to forest industry initiatives.

However, he says more needs to be done, as the safety concerns could be exacerbated by the changing patterns in forest ownership and log sales.

Owners of smaller blocks and log traders will increasingly become involved in the industry – with less coordination and influence from bodies such as NZFOA and the Log Transport Safety Council.

He said upgrading, and funding in particular, of roading in the regions is another key concern.

"NZFOA and NZFIC believe the local authority rating mechanism is inappropriate – it is archaic, a relic that reflects the smaller scale and less flexible transport patterns of the past."

He says the responsibility for regional roading should come under regional rather than local authorities to ensure a wider, more consistent and integrated view of roading planning, development and funding.

"The rating mechanism should be replaced with a user pays process whereby the users of regional roads fund development and main-

tenance through road user charges and fuel taxes in much the same way as state highways are funded on a national basis.

"Funding should be raised based on the projected future use of a road by all users, not by hitting up the first forest owner whose wood reaches harvest maturity as happens in some districts."

He says central government's decision to fund roading infrastructure for regional development announced last year offers part of the solution.

"This was not an altruistic gesture – the country will recoup the spending through road user charges, fuel taxes, increased employment, personal/company taxation and lower accident and injury rates from safer roads. It is a sensible decision based on economic and social grounds."

But he says the funding does need to be more than a "one year wonder" – funding will need to continue for a number of years to develop the infrastructure properly.

For more information, contact Doug Robertson, tel 07 350 0863. 

Keeping up with rule changes

The Log Transport Safety Council (LTSC) has come out in support of a road rule change allowing all heavy truck and trailer units to travel at 90 km/hour.

"Logging trucks will be able to travel at the same speed as other heavy vehicles, which will mean a better flow of traffic," says LTSC secretary, Bruce Nairn.

"Now that everyone has to meet minimum performance standards in terms of stability, the extra 10 km/hour, from 80 km to 90 km/hour, shouldn't be a problem. The double-packet



Bruce Nairn

22 m trucks are also a lot more stable."

However, he says drivers will still have to take care when cornering, and drive to suit the conditions.

The first round of submissions on the proposed law change closed on 28 February.

No easy answer to falling bark

The LTSC will find out whether falling bark from logging trucks has caused any significant accidents before it makes a submission on the Land Transport Safety Authority loading code.

"We'll be looking at information gathered over the past two years on our 0800 number database before we can comment," says LTSC secretary Bruce Nairn.

"There is no easy solution to the problem.

Safety has to come at a reasonable cost, and so far, none of the suggestions have been viable. There's no way we can have a de-barker on every bush landing, for instance, and the costs of covering the loads would be enormous.

"However, there are some things that can help, like cleaning bark off trucks after unloading. That will require educating drivers. We can also investigate installing systems for drivers to blast or flush any loose bark away at sites where there is a high concentration of logging trucks."

He says LTSC will make submission later in the year after further investigations have been carried out.

For more information, contact Bruce Nairn, tel 0274 943 695. 

FIT gears up for influx of students

An increase in the volume of work being done in forestry has led to record numbers of people training in silviculture and harvesting.

Forest Industries Training (FIT) saw a 58 per cent increase in students from December 2001 to December 2002, and CEO, John Blakey, says those numbers are likely to keep going up.

"We have about 7600 people training in silviculture and harvesting now, but the industry is going to need at least a 50 per cent increase in those numbers by 2010 based on the potential volume of wood that's going to be available."

He says FIT is focused on offering top quality training to the influx of new students.

"Last year we completely reviewed our training quality assurance system, and, in May and June this year, we'll have an independent audit carried out.

"The quality of training is really important – we want people to have faith in us and in the courses we offer."

Safety initiatives

Shane Perrett, FIT forestry manager, says providing managers with tools to enhance workplace safety practices has also been a big focus.

"Individuals need to take responsibility for safety in the work place, but it's also about how you manage people."

He says the new FIT forestry courses introduced at the end of last year aim to provide supervisors and crew bosses, or people seeking those roles, with the skills and knowledge required to lead people in enhanced performance and productivity in the forest.

"This includes improved communication skills so managers are more skilled at getting health and safety messages out to their staff."

The new courses, which include first line management for managers, and national certificates in occupational health and safety,

were generic courses adapted to suit forestry specific requirements.

"Basically, we sat down with contractors and people working in the industry, asked them to tell us what they needed, and packaged the courses around that. They're very specific to New Zealand conditions, and New Zealand standards."

A number of publications have also been produced, including *Best Practice Guidelines for Mechanised Harvesting and Processing*, and a series of forest safety leaflets is being produced in conjunction with ACC, Centre for Human Factors & Ergonomics (COHFE) and Forest Industry Contractors Association (FICA).

These are available through ACC, or FIT regional training managers (see www.training.org.nz for contact details).

Copies of the Best Practice Guidelines for Mechanised Harvesting and Processing are available from FIT for \$60 (incl gst).

Contact Shane Perrett, tel 07 348 7250, or email shane.perrett@training.org.nz. 

Top level training in wood processing


Top level technical training in wood processing will be available for the first time in New Zealand when the National Centre of Excellence in Wood Processing and Education launches its new education programme next year.

The centre's programme director, Dr Jeff Weber, says two technical diplomas and a new engineering degree in wood technology are being designed for people who want to be future leaders in the industry.

"The courses are being developed in partnership with the industry, so they are not only academically sound, but also relevant to industry needs."

Each diploma will take about a year to complete, and will cover management, technical processes and wood science. The engineering degree is a four-year degree.

The Centre of Excellence was opened in May 2002 to counter an anticipated skill shortage in the wood processing industry. It is an initiative of Forest Industries Training, the University of Auckland, and Wairariki Institute of Technology.

For more information on available courses, contact Dr Jeff Weber, tel 09 309 9917, or email jeff.weber@training.org.nz 

Funding boost for bio-protection

Twenty million dollars will be invested in advanced bio-protection over the next six years through a new research centre at Lincoln University.


The centre has been set up to conduct fundamental research into plant bio-protection – a natural process that uses plants' natural mechanisms to make them more resistant to disease and insects. Students working on PhDs and postgraduate degrees in the area of bio-protection will also be able to receive university supervision through the centre.

Known as the National Centre for Advanced Bio-protection Technology, the centre was established last month with funding from the Royal Society of New Zealand in partnership with Crop & Food, AgResearch, Lincoln and Massey University. A number of collaborators were also involved, including Forest Research.

"Part of the research effort will be in forestry,

and there is a big opportunity for the forest industry to tap into a bigger, collaborative pool of skilled people in forest health research," says science and technology broker, Bill Dyck.

He says encouraging people to apply for technology and industry scholarships to study forest health issues with support from the centre would be a good way for the industry to maximise the opportunities offered by the new establishment.

"We really need to develop practical solutions for the problems we're facing today, and developing better ways to protect forests through natural processes is a step in the right direction," he says. 

Safety performance improved

The forest industry's safety performance is improving, with latest figures showing a significant reduction in the number of accidents relative to volume of trees harvested

Figures just released from the Centre for Human Factors and Ergonomics (COHFE) show the number of lost time injuries per million cubic metres of wood harvested decreased from 23.3 in 1990, to 5.8 in 2002.

"The steep drop in injuries is even more creditable because an increasing proportion of wood is being harvested in more difficult terrain," says NZ Forest Owners Association (NZFOA) chief executive Rob McLagan.

He credits the drop in injury rate to a "tremendous effort" by the forest industry.

"Five years ago, the forest sector took stock of its safety performance and carried out significant research into the causes of accidents. As a result, the NZFOA and NZ Forest Industries Council (NZFIC) launched the Forest Safe Campaign, followed by the People Safe Campaign.

"The latter was directed mainly at the problem of alcohol and drugs in parts of the industry, and now most major and medium sized companies operate comprehensive alcohol and drug programmes aimed at prevention and rehabilitation."

Zero tolerance

McLagan says that while the industry is "obviously pleased" with progress, there is more work to be done.

"NZFOA and NZFIC have now established a target of zero tolerance towards unsafe work practices and a further significant fall in the number of incidents per volume of trees harvested.

"Reaching these new levels of safety performance will require further efforts from all those involved in the industry, including Government agencies, ACC, OSH, management, employees and the unions."

He says a high level Safety Forum has also been established under the Wood Processing Strategy, comprising NZFOA, NZFIC, Council of Trade Unions and the relevant individual unions, ACC and OSH. This forum has also committed itself to a zero tolerance of accidents.

Sustainability

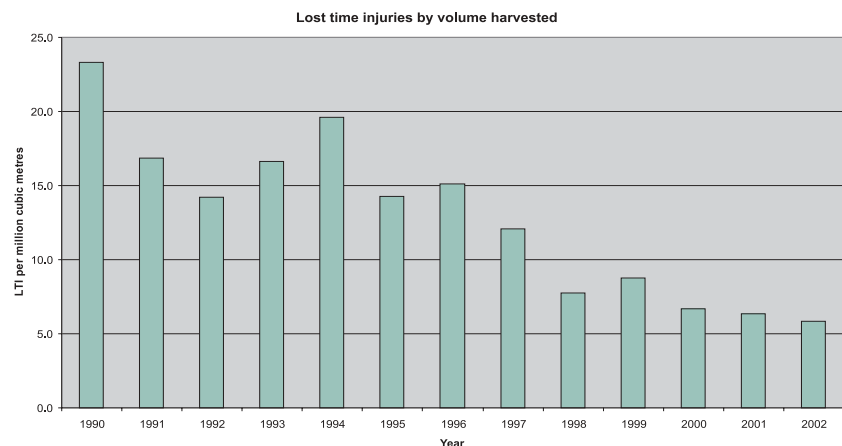
"Underpinning the improved safety consciousness and awareness of all the industry's players is the desire for New Zealand to be a world leader in sustainably managed forests.

"Sustainability includes not only environmental and economic sustainability, but also social responsibility for all of those working in the industry.

"These developments in safer working conditions will not only improve the welfare of those working in the industry, but will also improve productivity and assist the industry to become New Zealand's top export earner by 2025."

COHFE's annual Accident Reporting Scheme report will be available on www.cohfe.co.nz at the end of March.

Alternatively, contact COHFE manager, Richard Parker, tel 07 343 5899 or email richard.parker@chofe.co.nz.



Maintenance linked to safety

The new Forest Industry Contractors Association (FICA) will hold its first national seminar next month, focussing on the links between maintenance, safety and profitability.

FICA director John Stulen says an impressive list of practical industry speakers will deliver the goods at the inaugural technical seminar, to be held in Rotorua on 1 April.

"We pledged to new FICA members that we would get them working smarter, and this seminar on maintenance and machine technologies is right on the money in that respect," says Stulen.

"OSH have clearly indicated that all yarder

towers must be inspected before 1 June this year, and from our checks around the industry there are very few units which have been inspected yet.

"The technology transfer in this event goes beyond just yarders though. It calls on a wide variety of speakers, led by international maintenance professional, Dennis Suarez from Oregon, USA, to deliver practical ways for contractors to improve their operations," he says.

Key sessions for the one-day seminar include:

- Maintenance issues for yarder tower operators and owners
- Managing forest machinery for improved business performance
- Linking your maintenance to best practice and profitability

Stulen says FICA will address other operational needs for contractors in future, and plans to run one seminar each quarter for the remainder of the year.

For more information contact John Stulen, tel 07 921 1382, email john.stulen@fica.org.nz, or visit FICA's website, www.fica.org.nz.

Incursion by PPC inevitable

It won't happen over night – but it will happen. That was the message that came out of the joint NZFOA/MAF workshop on Pine Pitch Canker (PPC) held in Rotorua last month.

Key speaker at the workshop, Professor Mike Wingfield from the Forestry and Agricultural Biotechnology Institute in Pretoria, said New Zealand has "the best quarantine system in the world", but that wasn't going to be enough to keep the fungus out of the country.

Workshop facilitator, Bill Dyck, says it's just a matter of time.

"While we don't have it now, it will eventually get here. There was very good discussion and an obvious eagerness among participants to learn more about the disease. And we can learn a great deal from overseas experience, but unfortunately, the knowledge is still very limited," he says.

"It will only be with much more research on this disease, as well as other important pests,

that we will be in a strong position to counter any incursions."

He says PPC is a major problem for radiata pine, and is rapidly spreading throughout the world.

"We believe it's not in New Zealand yet, so we are in the perfect position to prepare ourselves for it."

An action plan was developed at the workshop to fill the gaps in scientific knowledge and risk management systems. These included:

- Developing the means for early detection (we currently can't do this)
- Developing a 'fire plan' which will detail who does what should the disease show up
- Thorough investigation of nurseries and old seed stores to prove that it isn't here

- Understanding how the fungus behaves, especially how it moves both between and within countries
- Developing genetic resistance (which probably means hybrid pines, as radiata alone doesn't look as if it will have enough inherent resistance, especially at the seedling stage)
- Developing new screening technologies to allow early screening to predict field performance
- Research on the potential to induce resistance in radiata pine.

NZ Forest Owners Association (NZFOA) chief executive Rob McLagan suggested at the workshop that a compulsory levy would need to be looked at to fund the research. He said it was important that company executives and boards of directors knew about the threat PPC brings, especially if nothing is done to stop it. [▲](#)

Forest health issues still on top

Public awareness of forest health issues has improved since the 2002 NZFOA/MAF forest health and biosecurity workshop held in Rotorua last February, says workshop facilitator, Bill Dyck.

"Twelve months on, we've given ourselves pass marks – but there's still plenty to do," he says.

"We've certainly increased awareness of forest health issues, and NZFOA has produced a business case showing the costs associated with diseases and insects in our forests, and the benefits of conducting targeted research."

He says more effort is going into post-border inspections by MAF, and industry is working to improve its forest health surveillance system to detect incursions before they can spread.

"The relationship between MAF and industry is excellent and the spirit of collaboration extends to the research providers."

He says the recent PPC workshop marked a commitment by NZFOA and MAF to maintain awareness of key forest health issues. [▲](#)

MAF takes no chances

The campaign to eradicate the painted apple moth looks promising, but the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) is taking no chances.

Contingency plans were put in place last month to ensure long-term management options are available if the programme proves to be unsuccessful.

"Contracts have been let to put a science programme in place to control the impact

of the moth if it takes hold. These will include things like mass trapping, mating disruption, biological control and some population dynamics modelling," says MAF's director of forest biosecurity, Peter Thomson.

However, he says aerial spraying is definitely having an impact, and looks likely to succeed.

"We caught 1300 male moths in December-January 2001/2002, and only 30 in the same period for 2002/2003. With 1450 traps extending 10 km out from the spray zone, we're confident wherever there are populations of the moth, we're picking them up."

He says the 10 aerial spraying cycles will be completed by mid-April. MAF will then go back to Cabinet with a plan for the future of the eradication effort. [▲](#)



Aerial spraying to eradicate the painted apple moth continues, but MAF has a 'plan B'

International forest experts meet in New Zealand

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) is to host a United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) experts meeting in New Zealand this month (24–27 March).

Up to 120 people from around the world are expected at the meeting, which will focus on maximising the role of planted



MAF's Don Wijewardana, is the driving force behind this month's UNFF meeting

forests in sustainable forest management.

"New Zealand's success with planted forests and long history of forest management means we are well placed to promote the benefits this approach has to creating a balanced use of all types of forests," says Don Wijewardana, MAF Policy team leader.

He says it is the second experts meeting on the topic to be held under the umbrella of UN processes which date back to 1992. These address global deforestation and establish principles for a consensus on the management, conservation and sustainable development of the world's forests and related resources.

The meeting's steering committee includes representatives from the NZ Forest Owners Association, the Forest Industries Council, the NZ Farm Forestry Association, Canterbury University, Forest Research, the Federation of Maori Authorities, World Wildlife Fund, Royal Forest & Bird Society and Government agencies.

Prime Minister Helen Clark will open the three-day, multi-lingual meeting in Wellington after an orientation field trip in Rotorua. A report and recommendations from the meeting will be taken to the UNFF's third session in Switzerland in May 2003.

For more information, contact Don Wijewardana, tel 04 498 9870, email wijewardanad@maf.govt.nz, or for a full programme, visit MAF's website, www.maf.govt.nz/unff-planted-forestry-meeting. 

Certification

Rotorua hosts FSC

The world's third biggest international certifying body – the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) – is to hold its first board meeting for 2003 in Rotorua from March 19 to 24.

FSC executive director Heiko Liedeker and the FSC board were invited to New Zealand by the National Initiative Working Group (NIWG), which has been developing national standards for sustainable management of New Zealand forests.

NIWG coordinator, Bill Dyck, says the FSC board members will be taken on field trips to see plantation forests, farm forests and native forests, and will also have discussions on forestry issues, especially around certification.

Many will go on to attend the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) Intersessional Experts Meeting in Wellington (see previous article).

National standards


Meanwhile, the Plantation Technical Committee is working through submissions on the draft National Standard for Certification of Plantation Forest Management in New Zealand.

The public was given an extra month to comment on the draft, with the closing date extended to 7 March 2003.

"The extension was made at the request of the NIWG environment and social chambers to give people more time to comment on what is a very complex document," says Dyck.

While the majority of submissions came from the forest industry's economic chamber, the other sectors have a lot to gain in terms of improved environmental standards and performance.

Once submissions have been considered, and assuming agreement is reached, it is envisaged that the standard will be sent to the Forest Stewardship Council for endorsement.

For more information, visit www.nzcertification.com, or contact Bill Dyck, email billdyck@xtra.co.nz. 


Surveillance systems reviewed

A review of New Zealand's biosecurity surveillance systems carried out last year identified a number of areas for improvement, but a comprehensive, coordinated strategy is not likely to be implemented until the 2004/05 financial year.

MAF Biosecurity Authority reported back to Cabinet last month with work programmes and implementation plans for some of the review's recommendations, but MAF director of biosecurity, Peter Thomson, says the remaining recommendations need a lot more consideration.

To address these issues the MAF Biosecurity team, in conjunction with NZ FOA, and Department of Conservation, has established a Biosecurity Surveillance Project.

"Through this project, we will construct a comprehensive and robust surveillance system for New Zealand's urban, exotic plantation and indigenous forests," says Thomson.

"We hope to have the project completed by November, when we'll discuss with Government what funding may be able to support a more comprehensive programme – though we expect funding will still be required to come from the forest industry," he says. 

Local government

Keeping local government in check

The controversial Local Government Amendment Bill was passed last December, and NZFOA chief executive Rob McLagan says few in the business sector are pleased with the outcome.

"The forest industry, and in fact all business sectors, are extremely disappointed that the government rammed through the Local Government Amendment Bill despite the strong opposition and concerns of the business community.

"Already, since the bill was enacted, a number of local bodies have indicated that they propose to take early advantage of the wider purposes of the bill and the power of general competence to get involved in a range of new activities.

"The funding of these will inevitably lead to higher rates, about 50 per cent of which are paid for by the business sector."

He says the forest industry is working closely with other business groups to ensure that the provisions in the bill, designed to check and monitor local government's enthusiasm to undertake new activities, are rigorously applied.

"As weak as these monitoring provisions are, they are one of the few ways in which the business sector can attempt to constrain increased local government expenditure on non-core activities," he says. 

Briefs


Transport best practice

Guidelines for safely loading and unloading trailers will be included in the Forest Industries Training (FIT) Best Practice Guidelines for Transport, due out next month.

FIT forestry manager Shane Perrett says the Best Practice Guidelines for Transport has been updated to incorporate changes to requirements identified by the Log Transport Safety Council (LTSC) and NZFOA Transport Committee, among others.

Copies can be ordered through the FIT website, www.training.org.nz, by email, forestindustries@training.org.nz, or from Shane Perrett, tel 07 348 7250.

LTSC secretary, Bruce Nairn, says FIT's Best Practice Guidelines for Transport will replace the Code of Conduct developed many years ago by NZFOA in conjunction with the Logging Institute Research Organisation.

If forest owners still require guidelines for loading and unloading trailers, contact Bruce Nairn, mobile 0274 943 695, or email tgmsservices@xtra.co.nz. 

Agricultural census

Final results from the first agricultural census to be held in eight years are due to be released by Statistics New Zealand in May 2003.

The Census of Agriculture, Horticulture and Forestry is part of the agricultural statistics programme and will be held every five years, with sample surveys held in between to update information.

Peter Benzie of Statistics NZ says the agricultural census will provide up to date benchmark data that can be used by central and local government for economic forecasting, trade negotiations, regional planning and policy development, and by businesses in their planning and decisions on investment.

"We had a very good response to the census, but it is not too late for people to return their forms if they haven't done so already. The more information we can get before May the better, so we can feed this in to the final results."

For a questionnaire, contact Statistics New Zealand, tel 0800 333 104, or email ag@stats.govt.nz. 

New bushfire research centre


New Zealand will benefit from a new \$114 million Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre being set up in Australia, following devastating bushfires there over the past two years.

Funding for the centre will come from the Australian government, and from 34 Australian and New Zealand stakeholders over the next seven years.

NZFOA Fire Committee chair, Kerry Ellem, says New Zealand's Forest and Rural Fire Research Programme (FRFRP) will contribute to several of the Bushfire CRC research programmes.

"The FRFRP was invited to be part of the new centre in recognition of the high standard of research being done in New Zealand.

"NZFOA is a major contributor to FRFRP, so getting the benefit from the research they're doing in Australia is a good way for NZFOA to get more bang for their buck."


The Bushfire CRC is expected to be fully operational by 1 July 2003. 

Landfill site wanted

Wairarapa district councils are on the hunt for a site suitable for use as a regional landfill.

Waste Management Wairarapa (WMW) say they would consider either purchase or lease of all or part of a forest block. In a lease situation, they may be able to offer the landowner benefits such as improved access roads.

A regional landfill would not be available to the public, but would be served by special vehicles collecting waste from transfer stations strategically located around the region.

Forest owners with potential sites that are not too close to communities should contact WMW executive officer Bill Sloan at Masterton District Council, tel 06 378 9666. 

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