

UNFF promotes benefits of planted forests

International experts on forestry attended a subsidiary meeting of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) held in New Zealand in March to discuss the role of planted forests in sustainable forest management.



UNFF delegates get a close up look at New Zealand's plantation forests

MAF Policy team leader, Don Wijewardana, said the meeting was a 'major step forward' for plantation forestry.

Wijewardana says the meeting highlighted a number of benefits from planted forests, including the ability to reduce pressure on indigenous forests, the potential to eradicate poverty in developing countries, and the provision of an alternative source of timber

to help stop the illegal log trade.

He says addressing the way plantation forests are assessed was a key for the industry.

"In the past, people have talked about planted forests on the basis of species – but that's wrong. We need to look at forests in the context of what they are intended to do, and the goods and services they can provide. In other words, recognising the importance of the ecological, social, cultural and economic contexts within which they function," he says.

The meeting made it clear that while planted forests contribute greatly to sustainable forest management, they should not replace natural forests, nor should they adversely affect the livelihoods of forest dependent or indigenous peoples.

In fact, says Wijewardana, suppliers of both planted and natural forest timbers needed to work together.

"Both timbers are environmentally friendly

when sustainably managed. Wood and wood products are by far the most energy efficient and environmentally friendly raw material. The real enemies are the alternatives to timber, like steel, aluminium and concrete."

Another enemy, he says, is the illegal log trade.

"Illegal logging is a cancer that is developing and cutting into the heart of sustainable forest management. It is about private gain and loss of national benefits. Everyone has to work together to stop that from happening. Governments need to be more forceful, and to urgently develop tools to address the illegal log trade, like certification and chain of custody evidence."

Wijewardana will take the recommendations from the New Zealand meeting to the wider UNFF group in Switzerland this month (June). The next phase will be to promote and implement the recommendations worldwide.

For more information, contact Don Wijewardana, tel 04 498 9870, email don.wijewardana@maf.govt.nz, or download the full report from the MAF website, www.maf.govt.nz



NZFOA chief executive Rob McLagan (left), MAF policy team leader David Rhodes (centre), and co-chair of the NZFOA/NZFC environment committee Bruce Chapman take a break from proceedings at the UNFF meeting

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In my view

Positively progressive industry

The pace of positive change in the forest industry rivals that of most other industries – even the so-called ‘innovative’ ones.

Only a decade ago the industry was largely production and commodity driven, whereas today it is a hi-tech innovative industry satisfying an increasingly wide range of customer needs.

The steady introduction of modern technology – both in the forest and in the processing sector – and the application of new research and world class management systems has seen productivity gains equal that of any other industry.

Today the scientist, inventor, engineer, logistics and IT expert, technician, economist, environmentalist and designer rank alongside the traditional and still vitally important skills of the forest manager and harvester. The industry provides a wide range of exciting career prospects, in a very large range of disciplines.

The industry is also at the forefront in introducing world leading sustainable and environmentally responsible practices. This was recognised at the recent meeting in New Zealand of the United Nations Forum on Forests (see front page article). Delegates acknowledged that our system of managing plantation forests was an excellent example of sustainable management, and had the added benefit of allowing New Zealand to set aside 24 per cent of its land area in protected indigenous vegetation.

In spite of the steep changes in efficiency and diversification made over the last few years, the industry faces very tight profit margins.

The industry has the will and capacity to continue to adapt to the challenges where it can influence the outcomes. However, it will con-

tinue to struggle with an increasingly hostile policy framework.

Two of our major forest companies have recently drawn attention to issues largely outside their control that could undermine the ability of the industry to reach to its potential in contributing to the economic welfare of the whole country. The Government must urgently review its policies relating to the labour market, energy, business compliance costs including the RMA, and the funding of the transport infrastructure. The Government and industry must and will continue to work together in improving access for forest products in overseas markets.

If the costs associated with these policies can be reduced, there is no reason why forestry cannot reach its target of being New Zealand's leading export earner by 2025.

Phase two of the Wood Processing Strategy still has a lot of work to do. ■

Certification

FSC gets up to speed with New Zealand forests

The international Forest Stewardship Council board visited New Zealand for the first time in March. It met with the National Initiative Working Group (NIWG) and visited New Zealand's plantation and managed natural forests.

“The FSC board went away with a much better understanding of New Zealand forestry, particularly the distinction between our two types of forests – something that is quite unique to New Zealand,” says NIWG interim coordinator, Bill Dyck.

“The NIWG had the opportunity to question the board about a number of issues relevant to the development of the New Zealand forest management standards, such as the

position we are proposing in the draft plantation standard on the research into genetic modification.

“It turns out that what is proposed in the draft standard is more restrictive than what the FSC has recommended, but according to Heiko Lieko, the executive director, it's up to New Zealand to decide how restrictive it wants to be, as long as it meets what FSC regards as minimum standards.”

To date, 50 submissions have been received on draft one of the Plantation Forest Management standard, mostly from the forest industry. Dyck says he's not surprised to see that some of the key areas of contention are the percentage reserve requirement, the restrictions on chemicals, restrictions on research into genetic modification and issues of access.

The Plantation Standard Technical Committee is in the process of working through all the submissions and agreeing on what clauses need to be changed before the next draft can go out for consultation to those who submitted on the first draft. The intention is to complete the standard as soon as possible, and get it accepted by the FSC Board. ■

Moths keep MAF on its toes

Being on the top of MAF's hit list is having an impact on the painted apple moth population.

In the five weeks ending 11 May, only one painted apple moth was caught in the 1600 traps set by MAF – the best result since the eradication programme kicked off in 1999.

"That's a pretty strong signal the programme's working," says director of MAF Forest Biosecurity, Peter Thomson.

He says it's taken a combination of strategies including aerial spraying, the release of sterile moths, and extensive host removal in areas difficult to spray.

"The sterile insect release programme had a big impact – we estimate 80 sterile moths have now been released for every natural male."

But it's not over yet. As Thomson says, "the

hardest moth to kill is always the last one".

MAF has recommended to biosecurity minister, Jim Sutton, that the eradication programme be continued over winter, but that a smaller area be targeted less frequently.

"It may also be necessary to use the Fokker plane for limited aerial operations next summer to ensure that eradication of the painted apple moth is successful."

Asian gypsy moth

Meanwhile, the hunt is still on for relatives of the single male Asian gypsy moth caught in a MAF trap in Hamilton in March.

Five hundred traps have been set within 7 km

of the site where the moth was found, and some up to 30 km away.

Despite the traps and intensive ground searching, no further gypsy moths have been found. Thomson says there are three possible scenarios being investigated.

"One is that an egg mass came into the country, and some survived. The second is that a pupae came in which resulted in one male moth, and the third scenario is that there is a population outside of the region, and this moth hitch-hiked a ride from somewhere else in the country.

"We believe the most likely scenario is the first one."

A group of scientists from New Zealand and the United States met at the end of April and all agreed that while there is a very low probability of finding more Asian gypsy moths, it was imperative the search continue.

"They said we need to be quite aggressive in the search, even if there's only a small risk. MAF is considering their recommendations, which include a combination of mass traps and aerial spraying in spring," says Thomson.

"We need to complete an economic impact assessment and satisfy ourselves that the recommendations are the best options, and necessary options. But what we do know is that if there are more moths out there and we don't get them before spring, they will spread."

He says the Asian form of gypsy moth is known to feed on pinus species, which puts the forest industry at risk. ■



The hunt is still on for relatives of the Asian gypsy moth caught in Hamilton in March

Crazy critters on the loose

Extra measures have been put in place at the country's borders following the discovering of crazy ants in sawn timber shipped from the Pacific Islands to Auckland and Tauranga wharves recently.

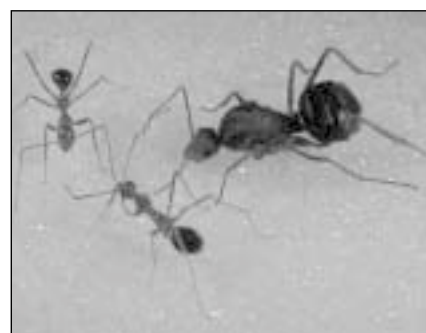
Director of MAF forest biosecurity, Peter Thomson, says the extra measures include intensive inspection regimes and higher fumigation requirements.

"It's a significant risk pathway that needs to be managed," he says.

"The MAF forestry team has completed a risk

assessment, and MAF is also doing an extensive survey for the ants around the country of mill sites and drying facilities that may have processed sawn timber from the Pacific Islands."

Crazy ants cause severe irritation on humans and animals. When disturbed, they run erratically in large numbers. ■



Crazy ant queen and two workers

Funds for development roads a 'necessary first step'

The Government's \$30 million injection into Tairāwhiti and Northland roading projects announced last October is starting to have a positive affect on the regions, according to forestry experts.

Industry NZ's regional forestry coordinator Peter Farley says there will be investment in additional processing in Gisborne as a result of upgraded access roads to new harvest areas.



Peter Farley

Northland Transport Working Group, says the work that's been done on key strategic routes

"This could not happen if we hadn't been able to upgrade the roads. In fact, it may even have been uneconomic to harvest some of the trees."

Neil Geerkens, co-chair of the WPS

and access roads in Northland has also had an impact.

"People can see progress is being made on the infrastructure, and one sawmill in Northland is actively going down the path of planning for expansion."

He says there has been general interest in further investment in the area, and the task now is to convert that interest into more jobs and more machinery.

"With the infrastructure in place, we will be able to employ more harvest crews in the region and, as a result, expand or establish more processing plants."

Farley says a further \$45 million is to be spent on Tairāwhiti and Northland transport

projects in the next two years. Forest owners are working together with councils and Transfund to prioritise how the money is spent.

"Transfund will only consider projects for funding when the priorities are approved by forest owners. This is in line with government objectives to accelerate development of additional processing in the regions."

NZFOA chief executive Rob McLagan says the funding of regional land transport projects in Tairāwhiti and Northland is a "necessary first step" toward dealing with the country's inadequate roading system, and is welcomed by the industry.

Work is currently underway in analysing the roading requirements of other forest areas, says Rob McLagan. ■



Neil Geerkens

Roading problem will get worse

In spite of contributions to roading projects in Northland and Tairāwhiti, New Zealand's roading system is still seriously under-funded and a proposed Bill before parliament could make the situation worse.

"The Bill no longer requires road user funds to be allocated on the basis of efficiency," said NZFOA chief executive Rob McLagan.

"This, and the provision for the minister to influence road funding decisions without public scrutiny, means that limited funds may be used poorly," he says.

"We recognise that economic efficiency should not be the only criterion for allocating roading funds. But when the minister issues instructions they should be gazetted and published, so everyone knows what's going on."

In a joint NZFOA/NZFIC submission on the Land Transport Safety Bill, McLagan said large amounts of road tax were already being siphoned

off into the consolidated fund for non-roading purposes and this could continue, or even expand, under the proposed legislation. "So it is doubly important that the roading funds that are actually used for roads, are used wisely."

He said the industry is also concerned about tortuous new consultation processes. These come on top of the requirements of Local Government and Resource Management Acts.

"These requirements are onerous, and will create additional costs and major delays – or even cancellation of projects that would otherwise have proceeded at less cost. A mechanism is required to ensure that issues are considered only once."

McLagan said the forest industry is being seriously affected by poor roads in the newer forest regions in particular, and the Bill will do little, if anything, to rectify the problem.

"If we do not address this issue directly, the regions requiring growth and new jobs will suffer. We hope the Government will seriously reconsider the Bill and make significant changes so the country can have safe and efficient roads." ■



NZFOA is concerned road tax will continue to be siphoned off for non-roading purposes under proposed legislation

Urgent need for drivers

The driver shortage is expected to get much worse in coming years unless urgent action is taken, according to the Driver Recruitment and Retention Project report published in April.

With a shortfall of 4000 drivers expected by 2005, and as many as 10,000 by 2010, the shortage is likely to have a major effect on the New Zealand economy.

The report detailed a number of reasons for the shortage, including low pay rates, the licensing system, severe penalties and inflexible hours, lack of encouragement from schools, ACC/OSH rules, working conditions and losing drivers to overseas markets.

A number of strategies to improve truck driver recruitment and retention were outlined, along with initiatives to deliver those strategies. Enhancing the training process, improving pay and conditions, improving the reputation of the industry and truck drivers,

and reducing the demand for drivers through productivity improvements should all be given "highest priority", the report said.

The NZ Forest Owners Association (NZFOA) commissioned the research, along with the Road Transport Forum and the Log Transport Safety Council.

Reiterating the conclusions from the report, NZFOA Transport Committee chair, Doug Robertson, says the driver shortage was not an issue the industry could solve on its own.

He says the results of the research will be discussed with a number of government agencies which could potentially help address the shortage, including Department of Labour,

LTSA, NZ Police CVIU, Ministry of Transport, WINZ and Skills NZ.

The full report can be accessed on the TERNZ website, <http://www.ternz.co.nz/reports.htm>. For more information contact Doug Robertson, tel 07 350 0863. ■



Record number of rollovers

The first three months of this year saw more logging truck rollovers than in any quarter since the Log Transport Safety Council started taking records in June 2000.

The LTSC recorded 18 on-highway rollovers from January to March 2003, with 12 of those occurring in March.

LTSC secretary Bruce Nairn says there was also a high number of accidents throughout the country involving cars and heavy vehicles from other industry sectors in the same time period, but there seemed to be no single factor causing the accidents.

"There was a range of reasons for the rollovers, like driver inattention, mechanical faults, evasive action to avoid a third party..."

However, he says despite the increased number of rollovers, not one involved a 22 metre double packet logging truck. A road rule change allowing an increase from 20 to 22 metre loads was introduced in June last year, after tests showed the longer, lower loads made trailers more stable and less likely to roll.

The industry is continuing to work hard on a number of initiatives to significantly reduce the number of rollovers, including recommendations arising from recent research into the supply of heavy vehicle drivers. ■

Buy back the tracks

The Government needs to buy back the rail network to put it on a level playing field with roading if it hopes to achieve an integrated transport system, says NZFOA transport committee chair, Doug Robertson.

"In its national transport strategy, the Government said it wanted an integrated transport system, but that will only happen if the rail system is in public ownership," says Robertson.

"That way regional and national road and rail upgrade and development decisions can be made in a neutral manner."

Robertson says the operation of the rail system, as in the running of the locomotives and rolling stock on the rail network, ideally should be open to competition.

"This may mean competitive tendering of entire regional services, or the ability for various companies to purchase time slots on major lines," he says.

"What we wouldn't like to see is a bail-out with the Government just taking a shareholding in Tranz Rail in an Air NZ type scenario. This could assist in maintaining rail services after a fashion but will do nothing to integrate New Zealand's transport system."

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



Fletcher Challenge Forests

International PPC research underway

An international research programme has been established in New Zealand to better understand the epidemiology of the Pine Pitch Canker fungi, *fusarium circinatum*.

The need for the programme was identified at February's Forest Biosecurity Workshop held in Rotorua, which was organised by the NZ Forest Owners Association and MAF.

"The workshop concluded that our current understanding of how the fungi spreads and infects pine trees is limited. We don't know why some trees become resistant, and there has been very little research on the impact of the disease on wood quality," says science and technology broker, Bill Dyck, who facilitated the workshop.

Dyck is working with New Zealand and overseas scientists on the comprehensive research programme, which will be marketed interna-

tionally to attract government and industry funding from pine-growing countries.

"New Zealand's forest industry currently invests about \$15,000 a year to understand PPC, but should the fungi get here the investment to contain and attempt to eradicate the disease would likely be three orders of magnitude greater," says Dyck.

"We really don't know how badly our pine forests would be affected, as indications are that at least some trees could become resistant to the fungi, but there may be an even bigger impact to our export log industry."

MAF's recently released Import Health Standard adds impetus to this argument as it

requires pine wood from PPC-infested countries or regions to be heat treated to a core temperature of 70 degrees.

"If log importing countries impose similar heat treatment requirements, as they have to, to prevent pine wood nematode getting into Europe and parts of Asia, the implications to New Zealand's log trade are enormous," says Dyck.

"We're very fortunate that we don't have PPC in New Zealand, but we can't rely on good fortune to keep the disease out or to contain it should it get here. A concerted research effort and good communication is required to protect both our forests and trade."

The NZFOA Forest Health Committee has established a special task group to develop a comprehensive strategy on ways to keep PPC out of New Zealand and procedures to be adopted should it be found here. ■

Wood products

Keeping it real

The NZ Forest Industry Council (NZFIC) has been working to ensure the forest industry doesn't bear the brunt of fallout from the 'leaky building' syndrome.

NZFIC chief executive Stephen Jacobi said proposals put forward by Standards NZ and the Building Industry Authority (BIA) that require all timber framing in new houses to be treated to H1.2 standard was like "using a sledgehammer to crack a nut", and could potentially damage international trade.

"NZFIC advocates treatment of timber where there is a heightened chance of water getting to the wood, but the weather tightness problem affects less than 1 per cent of all new

houses. For the vast majority of New Zealand homes it is unnecessary."

He says the proposals could damage the industry's efforts to promote radiata pine in international markets by calling into question the suitability of the timber.

"We're pleased the BIA has agreed to engage the NZ Institute of Economic Research to do a cost benefit analysis of its proposals before making any recommendations about changes to the building code," he says.

Once the analysis is completed, recommendations are expected to be released for public consultation in June. NZFIC will be 'actively participating' in the consultation process to ensure the suggested solutions are realistic and don't adversely affect the industry.

CCA treated timber

Meanwhile, Jacobi says results of ERMA's report into Copper Chromium Arsenic (CCA) treated timber, which found that CCA did not pose a significant risk to the public, was good news.

He said the issue was another potentially damaging one for the industry in terms of the public's perception of the qualities of wood.

"We welcome the outcome of the review, and also acknowledge there are things that can be done in terms of providing consumers with better information at the point of sale.

"NZFIC has been working with the Building Industry Federation on a consumer information campaign which will be released soon. We will also co-operate with government agencies as they work through the implications of ERMA's report." ■



Fletcher Challenge Forests

Hyperspectral imagery trial

Hyperspectral imagery, the latest in forest surveillance technology, has the potential to rapidly and inexpensively survey vast areas of forests for detecting disease, nutrient deficiencies, and even just determining species.

Smart Forests, a Division of Air Logistics, is planning to bring out a CASI-2 camera to trial with the forest industry and government departments. The company is working closely with Landcare Research to develop the technology for New Zealand applications.

CSIRO has calibrated CASI for detecting *Dothistroma* infection – a fungal disease of radiata pine that requires annual monitoring and spraying to control spread and reduce volume growth losses. Monitoring *Dothistroma* spread would be a key application for New Zealand plantation forestry.

CASI stands for Compact Airborne Spectrographic Imager, and CASI-2 is a second-generation instrument that is currently being used in agricultural, forestry, military and environmental monitoring operations.

CASI combines the best features of aerial photography and satellite imagery with the analytical potential of a spectrometer. The technology operates over a 545 nm spectral range between 400 nm and 1000 nm and has a 37.8 degree field of view across-track. Pixel resolutions can vary from sub-meter to 10 meters, thus offering the benefits of low flying remote sensing through to satellite imagery resolution.

Rick Walden, general manager of Smart Forests, believes the technology offers tremendous opportunities for the forestry sector as it promises to be able to detect disease, tree and weed species, and possibly even nutritional status.

For more information on the technology and on the proposed trial, contact Rick Walden, email Rick.Walden@airlog.co.nz



A CASI-2 camera is used to scan the forest

Air Logistics (NZ) Limited

Energy

Power shortage threatens investment

Further investment in forestry is being put at risk due to the current power shortage and consequent high and volatile prices, according to NZFOA chief executive Rob McLagan.

It has been reported that Carter Holt Harvey is reconsidering any energy intensive investments as a result of the energy crisis, and there will others.

"In addition to recently announced proposals to help meet periodic electricity shortages, the Government must ensure that increased base load capacity is put in place to meet the country's growing energy needs," says McLagan.

He says one of New Zealand's major competitive advantages is its relatively low priced energy.

"This advantage must be protected if we are

to remain internationally competitive and if the forest industry is to achieve its potential in generating increased foreign exchange earnings and new jobs, particularly in the regions."

Following the CHH annual meeting held in Auckland recently, CHH chief executive Peter Springford said labour, rising electricity prices and the Resource Management Act were all putting future investment in New Zealand at risk.

Other challenges included proposed labour market reforms, relatively low returns from forest and pulp businesses and lack of investment in rail infrastructure. ■

Credit where credit's due

The Government awarded itself a wind-fall gain by effectively nationalising post-1990 forest sink credits. Following is PF Olsen & Company's opinion on the topic. (Excerpt from Olsen News, May 2003).

One immediate outcome we can expect if the post-1990 forest owners are not dealt with fairly is a virtual halt to all new land planting from already low levels, and some harvested forest land reverting to pasture.

That outcome has serious consequences to New Zealand's carbon balances in the future, as the forestry sector would itself become a net emitter of carbon from about 2016. It is difficult to see how the Government expects to continue to meet its Kyoto commitments, as well as a growing economy, without some form of encouragement for new planting in the short-term.

In the longer term, the only sustainable incentive for continued planting will be increased stumpages. That in turn can be achieved if we get massive new investment into wood processing in New Zealand. To do that New Zealand must be internationally competitive as a place to invest. The government must urgently address some blockages to investment, the most obvious being:

- Shortage of energy supply and high costs when insufficient hydropower is available.
- RMA delays and costs.
- Trade access (tariff and non-tariff barriers for processed wood products).

For more information contact Rob McLagan, email robmcl@nzfoa.org.nz

FICA builds services

With a regular stream of new members joining up around the country, the Forest Industry Contractors Association (FICA) is building a range of business development tools for them.

FICA director John Stulen says the first technical seminar for members held in April, Machine and Maintenance Technologies for Forest Contractors, was very successful.

"The MainTech seminar was well received by members, and we're now working on a series of new programmes, such as regional ACC courses on implementing a Workplace Safety Management Programme," says Stulen.

"These will be free to FICA members."

Courses on business management improvement for forest contractors and their partners have been scheduled for July, and courses on improving staff management scheduled for September. Members can also learn practical tips and techniques in the Contractor Process Improvement seminar in November.

For more information on upcoming courses, contact the FICA office in Rotorua, tel 07 921 1382, or email john.stulen@fica.org.nz, or visit www.fica.org.nz

New CEO

Dr Keith Mackie from Forest Research has been appointed chief executive of the newly established forest research consortium, WQI Ltd.

NZFIC chief executive Stephen Jacobi says Dr Mackie has a wealth of experience and expertise in wood quality, and the industry welcomes his appointment.

WQI Ltd was established in February as part of an industry-government partnership to boost research and development in the sector. It has 14 shareholder companies from throughout the New Zealand and Australian forest and research industries.

Sea containers

The Government is reviewing the way it manages biosecurity issues with regard to sea containers.

It recommends non-MAF personnel be allowed to check containers, subject to suitable training and audits. It also recommends containers be examined and cleaned at the point of origin followed by audit checking in New Zealand, and that exporters and importers be given severe penalties for supplying false manifests.

In a joint submission on the review, NZFOA and NZFIC supported these recommendations, provided accredited non-MAF personnel are well qualified and severe penalties are administered for non-performance by both individuals and companies.

Car imports

The Government's *Import Health Standard for Treated Used Vehicles Imported into New Zealand* proposes vehicles are heat treated before being imported.

The NZFOA supports the proposal, as long as the standards are robust, and approved examiners are well trained.

In a submission made to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry last month, the Association also said that, for an initial period, all vehicles imported into the country under the proposed Import Health Standard should be inspected by MAF to ensure the system is achieving total kill of pests and diseases.

The Import Health Standard is due to be finalised by 30 July 2003.

Transport

Traffic control on forest roads

Traffic density in forests may be light compared to public roads, but forest roads are still classified workplaces under the Health and Safety Act and are governed by Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) rules.

Forest owners are required to ensure forest road users are pre-warned of activities that require changes in normal driving patterns. This is usually done through the use of the Transit NZ manual on signage for Temporary Traffic Management.

The manual sets out the type of signage required, the minimum distances prior to the activities the signage must be placed and the level of traffic management that must be in place (ie from signage only to physical traffic control).

Paul van der Voort, from the NZFOA Transport Committee, says the practical application coverage for forest roads is limited and possibly inappropriate for very low use roads as the code is designed for temporary traffic management on state highways.

"However, what forest owners must take from the code is the type of signs required to ensure the forest road users are informed of activities. Using signage which is the same as one would expect to find on highways will reduce confusion."

He says the distances given for placement should be used as a minimum, while still considering the practical application of speed reduction requirements of the vehicles using the forest.

"In some cases, the placement distance must be extended to take account of topography, and that vehicles operating in the forest may be of greater mass than those used on public roads."

For more information contact Paul van der Voort, tel 07 350 0838 or email paul.vanderVoort@fco.co.nz



Publication date: June 2003

New Zealand Forestry Bulletin is published quarterly by the New Zealand Forest Owners Association, 85 The Terrace, P O Box 1208, Wellington. Tel 04 473 4769, fax 04 499 8893, email robmc1@nzfoa.org.nz, www.nzfoa.nzforestry.co.nz

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