

now find radiata pine suitable for plywood and construction. The Japanese "two by four" association has already approached New Zealand for supplies of timber. A large delegation of plywood manufacturers were also here last year looking for suitable log supplies.

More importantly, the MAFF consumer affairs officials indicated that they will soon be moving into using stress grading as the basis of selecting construction timber. Such an approach will prevent any discrimination on the basis of species. The Japanese have already simplified the procedures for foreign testing organisations to certify standards without having it done in Japan.

Tariff restrictions

Tariffs on processed products entering the Japanese market have been another obstacle to exporting timber and other products. For instance, dressed radiata timber of less than 160 mm has an 8% tariff and rough sawn 4.8%; glue laminated timber and plywood are subject to 15% and 10% tariff rates respectively but indications are that Japan is now ready to negotiate "substantial reductions" in tariff rates for wood products at GATT negotiations.

CONCLUSION

The main conclusions that can be drawn from these discussions are:

- a) the future for plantation forestry is extremely good, given the projected rapid decline in tropical wood supplies;
- b) the Japanese are desperately looking for alternative sources of wood to replace their large tropical timber imports;
- c) the Japanese are liberalising their

building standards and changing the methods of selecting construction timber from a species basis to a strength basis; this should prevent the present discrimination against radiata pine;

- d) tariffs which discouraged the import of processed wood products are to be reduced substantially as part of the GATT round negotiations (confidential), and this should allow more processed products exports to Japan.

Taskforce to investigate pollution from sawmills and timber preservation plants

In late December the Minister for the Environment, Simon Upton, announced the formation of a Task Force to investigate and report urgently on potentially contaminated sawmill and timber treatment sites.

"The task force will identify the exper-

tise required to arrange for the identification, assessment and management of any site contamination and will report back to me," said the Minister. "It will include representatives of local government, timber industry management, unions and key government agencies."

Research funded by the Ministry for the Environment, and carried out by the Cawthron Institute and the DSIR, has shown that potentially serious contamination by toxic chemicals could have occurred at these sites.

The research shows that pentachlorophenol (PCP), an antiseptic agent widely used in New Zealand for about 40 years until 1988, contains dioxins. These dioxins, which are highly toxic, may have accumulated in the sludges at the bottom of dip tanks on treatment plants.

Fulbright fellow for Canterbury Universities

Agroforestry research and studies at the School of Forestry and Lincoln University will get a boost with the appointment of Dr W.R. (Bill) Bentley as a visiting Fulbright fellow. Dr Bentley is currently Director of the Tropical Resources Institute at Yale University and also provides leadership to the Winrock International Institute for Agricultural Development research programme on agroforestry. His background is in forest economics, social aspects of agroforestry, and biomass energy, and he has had extensive experience in tropical agroforestry, particularly in India.

There are two main objectives for his visits which will total eight to nine months over the next three years. First he will be assisting in the design of and teaching into, the new agroforestry undergraduate course which will be taught to both forestry and agricultural science students at Lincoln University. Next year will be the first time School of Forestry students, under the new curriculum, will be taking most of their third year lectures at Lincoln. Dr Bentley's input will be vital to strengthen the tropical and social aspects of agroforestry –

aspects of great importance to those wishing to understand or help implement agroforestry schemes in developing countries.

Secondly, the Universities are keen to promote greater research into agroforestry in the Canterbury region. It is hoped that the background of Dr Bentley and his regular visits will provide a catalyst for more co-operative and intensive research. This could be across various departments within the Universities as well as other Government research organisations in the region. Last year the School of Forestry and Plant Sciences Department, with the help of Tasman Forestry Ltd, established a joint agroforestry field trial. But this is seen as only the beginning of co-operative research.

Dr Bentley's first visit here under the Fulbright programme is later this year, at which time he will be travelling extensively in New Zealand. But before then foresters will have a chance to get to know him as he will be a keynote speaker at the ANZIF meeting in Christchurch in September – October.

D.J. Mead

Health Risk

"It is important that this hazard is treated seriously because of the risk to the health of workers, as well as the risk to the environment," said Mr Upton.

The Government has already taken the steps necessary to safeguard workers' health. An interim code of practice to protect the health of employees, and prevent the future release of toxic chemicals into the environment was released recently by the Occupational Safety and Health unit of the Department of Labour and the Ministry of the Environment.

Co-operation

"I appreciate the co-operation of the industry up to this stage," said the Minister. "I look forward to continued co-operation as the affected sites are identified and the clean up is undertaken."