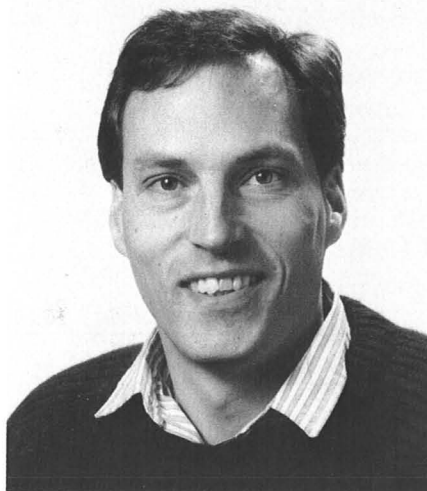


ing some forestry aspects of this degree. Furthermore, they have recently appointed Dr Hugh Bigsby to the Commerce and Marketing Department (see below).

#### **Dr Hugh Bigsby**

Dr Hugh Bigsby has recently been appointed as a Lecturer in the Economics and Marketing Department of Lincoln University. He will play a major role in developing the new B.Comm (For) degree.

Before moving to Lincoln University, Hugh Bigsby was Senior Economist for Alberta Energy Company Ltd in Calgary, Alberta. There he was involved with corporate planning for oil and gas, forest products and fertilisers. Prior to that he spent six years with the Forestry Section of the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry at the University of Melbourne. There he taught, researched and consulted in forest economics, forestry policy and forest management. He has also spent time working as an economist for the Alberta Forest Service and the Forestry Branch of



**Dr Hugh Bigsby**

the Saskatchewan Government. Dr Bigsby has a Doctorate from the University of Melbourne, his thesis being on the trade of forest products in Oceania.

Dr Bigsby is married and has two children.

**Don Mead**

## **POSSUM CONTROL PROGRAMME – DOC**

The Minister of Conservation, Denis Marshall, recently announced that additional financial resources have been made available for increasing the effort on possum control. The additional funding of \$3 million increases by 100% the resources that the Department of Conservation will now have for controlling possums. To ensure that the increased funding is spent for the greatest result, the department will be operating under a new draft national possum control plan that has ranked possum control priorities on a national basis.

#### **Possum damage**

The Australian brushtail possum has now colonised 92% of New Zealand's land area. The animals are especially numerous in native bush and shrubland communities. Possums eat out and collapse the canopy of native forests and have changed the appearance of whole mountain ranges and forest landscapes. Their selective attacks on canopy and subcanopy plants, creepers, epiphytes, native shrub and ground-dwelling plants, continue to degrade the botanical integrity of many native plant communities. Possums have eaten a native mistletoe to extinction and threaten the well-being and survival of many other plant and animal species. New information indicates that possums may also play a significant role in preying on some native animals and birds and they are known to rob other species of their food and nest sites. An unfortunate down side to efforts in controlling possums through the use of traps and poisons has been that native and introduced bird species have been inadvertently killed and maimed.

Possums cost the New Zealand taxpayer, ratepayers, farmers, foresters and other landholders dearly. Quantifiable costs in managing possums and their associated damage exceed \$40 million. While it is impossible to set a monetary value on possum damage to the conservation resource it is estimated that if the bovine

Tb problem is not controlled then New Zealand's \$5 billion annual trade in dairy and beef products will be at risk.

#### **Control measures and responsibilities**

Since 1990 the Department of Conservation has been spending \$3.1 million annually on controlling possums. This has permitted control operations to take place annually over 90,000 hectares or 2% of the 4.6 million hectares managed by the Department. The Animal Health Board has in addition been spending Government funding of \$1.3 million controlling tubercular possums on conservation lands, focusing on the pasture-bush margin. Government has announced that this will be increased to \$6.1 m per annum.

The responsibility for management of the possum-disease complex can be confusing. The initial responsibility for management of any pest lies with the owner of the interest affected. In relation to bovine Tb, the policy responsibility is held by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. Because bovine Tb is a disease of national significance, provisions have been made for the mandatory control of the disease and therefore of the vector, possums. The agency in whom this responsibility is vested is the Animal Health Board, which uses Regional Councils as service delivery agents. The funding used by Animal Health Board for operational control of possums on private land is derived largely from levies paid by farmers on all cattle killed. Government funds the AHB, through MAF, for control of possums on lands of the Crown, including Conservation land, where such control is for bovine Tb reasons. It is important to realise that Regional Councils have no statutorily-based requirement to control either bovine Tb, or possums, although some do contribute ratepayers' funds to increase the effectiveness of funds available from the AHB. Expenditure on possum control as a means of Tb bacillus control obviously has spin-off benefits for conservation.

The Department of Conservation has national policy responsibility for the protection of flora and fauna on all land, and responsibility as a land owner for pest control on the Conservation Estate (c.30% of New Zealand's land surface).

The Ministry, and the Department, liaise to ensure that the programmes of possum control designed by each agency are fully coordinated to achieve the optimal outcome.

The prime objective of the draft national control plan is to conserve native

## **Marubeni and rain forest project**

Much criticism has been levelled at the Japanese trading companies for their involvement in rain-forest felling in South East Asia, with Mitsubishi Corporation a particular target. The companies are sensitive to the criticism and are taking steps to improve their environmental reputations. Marubeni's environmental division is now running a research project related

to rain-forest regeneration in Sarawak, with the involvement of Japanese and American researchers as well as the Sarawak Forestry Bureau. The project is focusing on animal and plant ecology related to the forest crown as well as the linkages between biological and climatic factors. – **Reprinted from Japanlink, Ministry of Forestry, Rotorua.**

plants and animals and their supporting natural communities, ecosystems and ecological processes, against possum damage, as cost effectively as possible over the next 10 years. The plan establishes rules and criteria for evaluating and responding to the possum threat to native plants and animals and for evaluating between different control methods and auditing techniques. A key element of the plan is the ranking of all conservation-managed land on the basis of its conservation values and degree of risk, so that national control priorities can be set. The increase in funding and the setting of national priorities means for the first time a well focused and financed possum control programme for sustained control can be put into action.

**Mike Cuddihy**  
**DOC**



## Radiata pine moves up market – and leaves a gap

New Zealand radiata pine has been a staple of the Japanese industrial packaging market for many years, but has recently been undergoing a reappraisal by the forest products industry in Japan, to the extent that more New Zealand product is being utilised in the plywood and lumber markets.

Traditional resource constraints, price escalations for raw logs, and New Zealand efforts over the last few years to educate the market about the qualities of radiata pine have probably all played a role in changing Japanese perceptions of what end-uses radiata pine is best suited to. But now it seems that, just as radiata is acquiring a more respectable reputation in Japan, there are moves to replace it. The problem lies in the differential between the (high) log cost and the (relatively low) price of the finished product, which is squeezing the profitability of the processing sector.

The issue affects both radiata pine and North American lumber. The Japan Forest Products Journal notes in a recent edition that some processing companies are looking to replace North American species with red pine, while Southern US yellow pine is seen as a substitute for radiata. Southern yellow pine is similar to J-grade radiata in price, and is being looked at seriously despite concerns about blue-stain. Cost, quality factors, and concerns about longer-term supply and cost stability are clearly playing a part.

The perceived move away from radiata is not a widespread phenomenon, but is taking place on a background of expecta-

tations of further price rises and currently low stocks. The negotiations on the third quarter price for NZ logs commenced in mid-June. The Japanese side were expecting price increases of at least 10%, given the stock situation (down to as low as one month), the recent 4-5% appreciation of the yen and demand for logs from coun-

tries such as Korea.

Additional supply problems, as they see it, are the need for the New Zealand growers to regulate harvest volumes and service New Zealand processors. – (Reprinted from JapanLink, Ministry of Forestry, Rotorua.)

## Memo on timber in spotted owl region may hurt Clinton's bid for compromise

The Clinton administration is finding there is less timber available for harvest in the spotted owl region than had been believed – a finding that could complicate its search for a compromise in the long-running dispute over Pacific Northwest forests.

The reassessment, disclosed in an internal administration memo, suggests that the White House is likely to support lower harvest levels than industry groups are demanding. At the same time, it could reduce the chance that the administration will favour setting aside reserves that are off limits to cutting, a major goal of environmental groups.

The report indicates that the Forest Service has been overestimating harvest levels. The White House commented: "We are taking steps immediately to investigate discrepancies on a forest-by-forest basis."

The analysis underscores the difficulty the White House faces in fashioning a

spotted owl plan that will meet President Clinton's pledge to balance economic and environmental interests, and break the log-jam over timber policy. The new plan, promised at a forest conference in Portland, Oregon last April, probably will be unveiled in August.

Forest Service estimates have been criticised before by environmental groups and others. The memo says that a 1991 report to Congress by a panel of scientists found that sustainable harvest levels in the Pacific Northwest region were on average 15 per cent lower than Forest Service estimates. Now, the memo says the discrepancy has grown, citing forests where the amount of harvestable timber is 20 to 40 per cent below Forest Service estimates. Regionwide, the reduction is closer to 33 per cent rather than 15 per cent. – Reprinted from *Tradenz Timber Trends*, New York.