

The public's perception of plantation forestry

Plantation forestry rates fairly well with New Zealanders, who praise the industry for its overall economic contribution and support of local communities. But forestry is perceived negatively for its environmental impact and export of logs. These are some of the key results from a recent NZFOA public opinion survey.

The research revealed that just over half (54.2%) of respondents viewed the forestry industry positively, and those who didn't rate it positively held a neutral rather than a negative view.

Forestry was also rated alongside other prominent New Zealand industries on issues of general image, employment, economic and social contributions and environmental impact.

Very Helpful

"The results are very helpful to the forestry industry and will help the Association clarify areas where we need to improve our performance or increase our communications," says NZFOA President Peter Hill. "We're a significant industry and we touch a lot of people's lives. It's important for us to anticipate people's concerns."

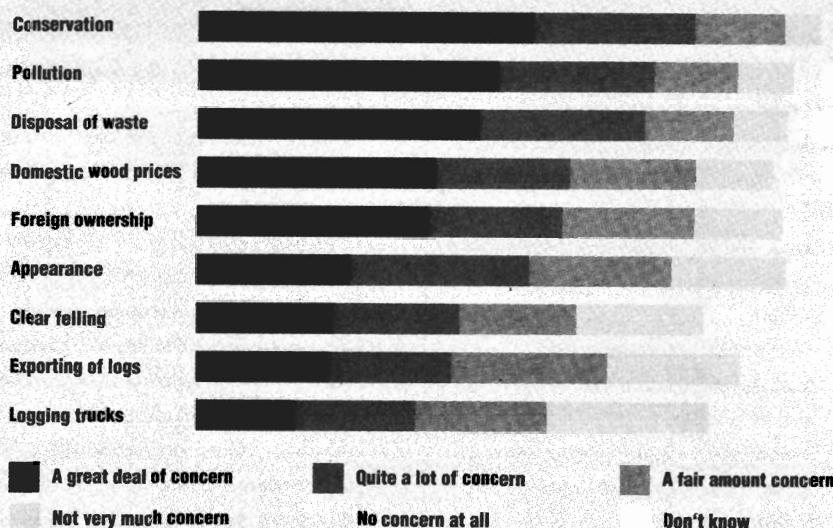
The research was carried out in September 1994 and involved 1000 respondents throughout New Zealand. This is the third consecutive year the Association has monitored public opinion on the forestry industry.

The Association was surprised by the public's poor perception of the forestry sector as an employer. Forestry was effectively overlooked by the survey respondents as an employment option. Only one in ten people voted it the most preferred employer and one in ten the least preferred. The Association is concerned about this indifference.

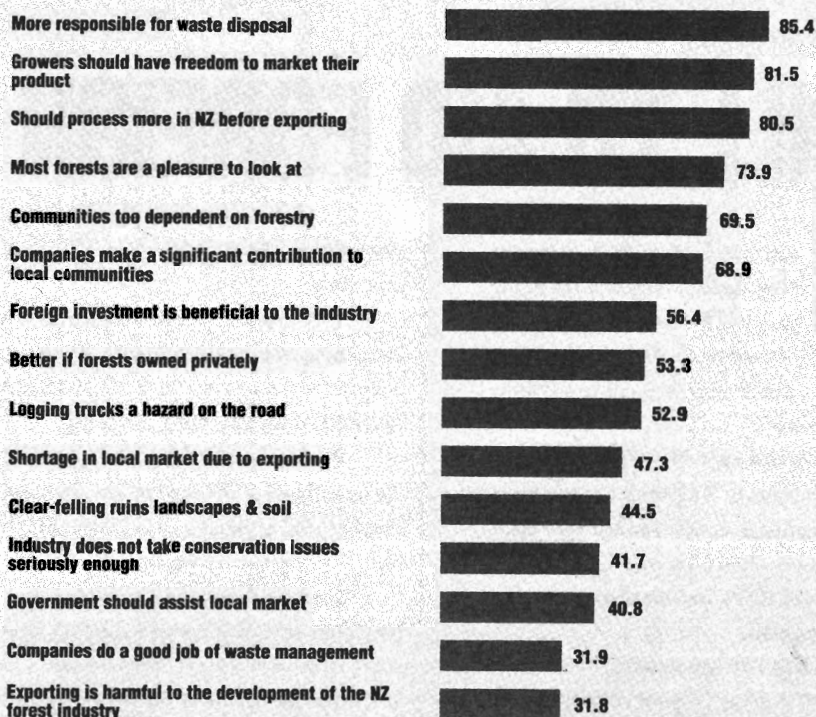
Career Option

"Forestry is expanding rapidly and we need skilled and enthusiastic people," says Mr Hill. "Obviously we need to look at how the industry is projected as a career option."

FORESTRY IMAGE SURVEY Areas Of Concern – September 1994



FORESTRY IMAGE SURVEY Image Statements – September 1994



NB. Figures reported are for total agreement i.e. Agree Strongly and Agree Slightly

The survey revealed that New Zealanders are generally aware of the issues involved in forestry, although the depth of knowledge and familiarity with the topics is not extensive. Significant issues are forest ownership, the environment and price and availability of local timber. – reprinted from NZFOA magazine – Forestry Bulletin.

Malcolm Conway

Malcolm Conway died peacefully in his sleep on the morning of April 13. He was in Christchurch attending his school reunion. An obituary is being prepared by Priestley Thomson and Ross Macarthur for publication in the August issue of NZ Forestry. Ed.