



## From the President

Peter Berg

A number of issues of significance to foresters and forestry have been given prominence in the media over the last few weeks. Some have been raised because of events outside New Zealand, such as the outbreak of Foot and Mouth disease amongst farm animals in the United Kingdom and the recent announcement by United States President Bush that his administration is not necessarily committed to global climate change conventions. Locally the "boards for the Beehive" debate has demonstrated how easy it is to get caught by your own dogma.

In each case human intervention to sustain forests and ensure forest management practice is sustainable has been advocated. Taken at face value these proposals appear both rational and prudent, but in practice commercial and emotional self-interest may be over-riding other considerations.

An example of the latter appears to have been the decision to reline the Beehive with new timber paneling. The intention to replace the existing Tawa panels with an unsustainably harvested African timber apparently arose because of a directive to avoid using "native" timbers. Once the issue was identified in the media the confusion quickly spread.

- "Native" was interpreted to mean native to the country from which the wood was to be supplied (a positive signal for those countries whose forestry business is based around plantations of introduced species such as New Zealand, but not necessarily positive in terms of promoting international biodiversity).
- The directive was interpreted as intending to encourage use of one of New Zealand's plantation grown species such as macrocarpa (*Cupressus macrocarpa*, native to California but grown in New Zealand). Whether New Zealand has stocks of this species of the quality and in the quantities required is a moot point, and certainly doesn't take into account sustainability objectives.
- The decision to forbid the use of New Zealand's native species is difficult to rationalise. The management of native forest in this country to produce wood on a sustainable basis is both lawful and environmentally desirable, and some of our native timbers are acknowledged as being amongst the most beautiful to be found anywhere. If the Beehive is not the right place to display some of New Zealand's treasures then it is hard to figure the alternatives.
- Most bizarre of all, no one appeared ready to promote the virtues of the kingpin of our forest industry, radiata pine. There are several excellent examples of offices fitted out and furnished with this species around the country, the timber is widely promoted in furniture fairs at considerable expense around the world and the opportunity to feature it to foreign visitors has great commercial potential. The fact that neither Government nor the industry stepped up in support of the opportunity is difficult to understand.

The lack of coherent policy in this regard appears to be

matched by Government's desire to lead the world in ratifying the Kyoto Protocol on climate change. Most foresters would agree that forests and forest products have a significant part to play in the debate, for example;

1. New and existing sustainably managed forests contribute to and can expand global carbon stocks.
2. Sustainably sourced forest products expand the global carbon stock through:
  - The retention of carbon in short, medium and long life forest products (such as the Beehive's paneling);
  - Recycling of forest products (is the tawa paneling in the Beehive unsuitable for surface re-dressing?);
  - Providing a source of renewable energy which can displace fossil fuel; and,
  - The displacement of energy intensive non-wood substitutes.
3. Optimising the use of harvested wood products is a legitimate step towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing carbon stocks (under Kyoto Protocol Article 3.4).
4. It is technical possible to measure, account for and verify carbon stocks in harvested wood products.

Failure to recognise and give due weighting to these matters could seriously disadvantage New Zealand's commercial forest industry into the future and it would be prudent for the Government to hold off ratifying this or any other treaty without first being sure of the stance of other significant forestry trading countries.

All of which leads to a third issue, i.e. how sustainable are our plantations? New Zealand forest industry representatives have for some time been working to establish internationally credible standards to certify the sustainability of our plantation management practices. Certification would certainly enhance market access and probably give the NZ industry some advantage over its competitors for some time to come.

However it is possible that the research base to support sustainability claims is not as robust as it might be. For example, do we know all the answers about:

- The effects of present forest management practices on soil biophysical properties and the processes that control productivity?
- The effects of alternative practices that might be expected to ameliorate adverse impacts (e.g. growing mixtures of species, selective harvest, etc)?

An interesting division has developed with the plantation-based group of forest owners wishing to promulgate standards that quite specifically exclude managed indigenous forest. There is a sound rationale to this position; environmental NGOs have indicted they will not support the local or international ratification of forest management standards if they are also to apply to our indigenous forests. In many other countries sustainable management of native

forests will be the norm and any plantation manager will be expected to achieve the same standards of performance in whatever terms are used to certify sustainability. There is little doubt that the New Zealand community has a keen interest in our native forests, and accordingly the emphasis on different aspects of management practice may be greater than is the case with our plantations. Nevertheless the key principles are likely to be the same.

Apart from the obvious political implications and the pragmatic response to this by the plantation forest owners, it is not clear why New Zealand should need to have two sets of sustainable forest management standards. Council has discussed this matter at some length and continues to oppose the division, however members may have other views and I would welcome wider discussion of these.

There is unlikely to be any disagreement with the sudden heightening of interest in border protection associated with the outbreak of Foot and Mouth disease in the UK. For some time there has been widening concern about our pest interception practice and control, largely based about the failure to contain and eradicate the Painted Apple Moth in the Auckland suburbs (in stark contrast to MoF's treatment of White Spotted Tussock Moth only a couple of years before).

Only a few weeks ago a Government department rejected the opportunity to impose pre-border (off-shore) inspection of imported motor vehicles, and is

quite at odds with the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment on this matter. The emphasis given to pests of significance to our primary industry is commendable, however there is also little doubt that our indigenous biodiversity is at risk and needs greater emphasis. It is unclear whether these are issues of focus or resourcing, what is clear is that no one agency can be expected to address these issues on its own and NZIF Council will be continuing to put its weight behind further strengthening of the biosecurity system, and supporting MAF or any other agency to further develop their import quarantine capability.

Finally I would like to mention the departure of Michael McLarin from Council and New Zealand. Mike has put a lot of time and energy into coordinating and promoting local section activity and while we are sorry to lose his contribution we wish him well in his new role in Tasmania.

For those of you less-sure or less committed to local section activity, I urge you to consider again the opportunities these meetings provide for interaction with local communities, keeping up with events and changing forestry technology, and networking with your forestry peers.

Having visited several local sections over the last year it is evident to me that the enthusiastic, well-led local sections remain the life-blood of the Institute and I congratulate those local section office bearers and organizers for their continued input in this respect.

## NZIF Submission to the Primary Production Select Committee inquiry into sustainable forestry management

In representing the forestry profession in New Zealand, the Institute of Forestry wishes to principally focus on the primary objective of the inquiry, as set out in Mr Damien O'Connor's press release dated 24 August 2000, viz. *to examine how confidence in New Zealand's indigenous wood industry can be secured and maintained*. Therefore this submission is seeking to address principles rather than details.

### Summary

The following principles apply to management of the indigenous forests of Aotearoa/New Zealand:

1. Forestry is the art and science of managing forests.
2. Sustainable forest management has been developed in Europe over the past five hundred years and in Aotearoa/New Zealand over the past century.
3. Silviculture can vary widely for particular forest types and species.
4. Sound research has been carried out to determine appropriate means of sustainably managing New Zealand's indigenous forests.
5. New Zealand indigenous forests can be sustainably managed either as near natural forest or as "plantations".
6. Most natural temperate hardwood forests throughout the world have a high percentage of dead, decadent and diseased trees.
7. Temperate hardwood forests, such as New

Zealand beeches, are responsive to management which enhances their health and productivity.

8. New Zealand has demonstrated world leadership in sustainable management of indigenous production forests.
9. Sustainable production management of indigenous forests is a long term commitment.
10. Security of tenure is an essential pre-requisite for indigenous sustainable forest management.
11. Community "ownership" of sustainable management of indigenous forests is essential.
12. Management of indigenous forests must be economically viable.
13. Management of indigenous forests must be environmentally appropriate.
14. The above principles can be best understood by visiting sustainably managed indigenous forests.

### Principles of sustainable forestry

The principles applicable to management of the indigenous forests of Aotearoa/New Zealand, summarised above, are hereunder briefly explained.

1. **Forestry is the art and science of managing forests.** Sustainable forest management is management to perpetuate particular types of forest.
2. **Sustainable forest management, as we know it today, has been developed in Europe over the past**