

prescribed pre-treatment removed two-thirds of the original lignin before you even tried to measure it!

Publishing that was facilitated by a U.S. group finding the same thing shortly after. This period at least got me to an APPITA conference! Various interesting consequences followed from realising that a lot of forage lignin is semi-dispersible, but that's another story.

Another restructure and I was able to initiate a new project, funded by the Rural Industries R&D Corporation, that got back to trees, and this time invoked some forestry concepts. The earlier results on *Albizia lebbbeck* suggested in fact a new agroforestry system for the semi-arid tropics. Appropriate species could be grown at wide spacings in pasture to increase grazing animal production, but managed in the right way they could also yield timber that would have a small volume, high value market. What's more the cost of pruning and thinning could be offset by the feed value. Gathering data from existing trees in a variety of situations suggested several candidate species. Most showed good volume increments and it looked as though one could harvest at about age 20. When it came to my favourite, *Albizia lebbbeck*, it was a nasty shock to do some coring and find that the sapwood to heartwood conversion took about eight years. A 20-year old stem was still mostly sapwood.

However this suggested a unique management option. It is an accepted practice in parts of Australia for graziers to lop native fodder trees for drought feeding, a practice that declines with the number of remaining trees. It is a biological fact that removing large amounts of a tree crown will hasten the conversion of sapwood to heartwood. We know that *Albizia lebbbeck* and the other candidate species regrow vigorously after lopping. Thus in our new agroforestry system, from say age 20 one carries out savage lopping, as needed over a few years, for drought or dry season feeding. In the process one converts sapwood to heartwood. A case of "adding value but not volume". Alas, this idea has yet to be tested in practice.

A final flourish before retiring from CSIRO was to extend my agroforestry ideas to management of the "dry rain forests" that are a feature of much of Australia. The key element here is to take seriously recent findings that Australian vegetation was drastically changed around the time of first human settlement 40 k years ago. The role of humans, hunting, fire and climate is hotly disputed but hardly matters. Evidence is that the non-sclerophyll trees of interest can do well over much larger areas than their present range, suggesting the valuing and promoting of existing remnants. I modestly called this the "Return to Eden" hypothesis. Some people like it!

Why keep up membership in NZIF throughout all this? Well one motive might have been just to claim to be a forester in cases where it was a good conversation stopper, particularly with pasture scientists. More to the point I suppose was that there was always the chance one might come back to New Zealand and anyway I enjoyed keeping some awareness of the profession and its people. Long may they prosper!

## 2003 NZIF Awards

The recipients of the 2003 NZIF Awards were announced at the 2003 ANZIF Conference Dinner in Queenstown. There was strong interest in these awards with eight applications for the Undergraduate Scholarship and seven applications for the two travel awards.

### Scholarships

**Yvette Dickinson** received the NZIF Undergraduate Scholarship. Yvette is a fourth year Bachelor of Forestry Science Student at the University of Canterbury. During her study last year she received the MR Jacobs prize in Silviculture. Yvette assisted the dedicated team who put together the ANZIF Conference Proceedings.

The Frank Hutchinson Post Graduate Scholarship was awarded to **Bryan McKinley** from Hawkes Bay. Bryan is undertaking forestry related postgraduate study through Lincoln University.

The Mary Sutherland NZ Polytechnic Scholarship was awarded to **Arran Lang** of Rotorua. Arran is a second year Diploma of Forestry student at Waiariki.

### Travel Awards

The Chavasse Travel Award went to **John Moore** of Forest Research, Christchurch. John plans present a paper titled "Wind Damage in Alternative Silviculture Systems" at the 5-yearly IUFRO Conference on "Wind Effects on Trees" in Germany in September. John returned to NZ after completing his PhD at Oregon State University last year.

The Balneaves Travel Award was awarded to **Bill Dyck**. Bill works as an independent Science and Technology Broker. He plans to use the award for travel to arrange an international research programme on Pine Pitch Canker. Pine Pitch Canker is potentially a serious treat to New Zealand's radiata pine forests. Bill has already committed his own time to this project. Earlier in the year a joint FOA/MAF workshop reinforced the need for further research on Pine Pitch Canker.

As part of the travel award both John Moore and Bill Dyck have agreed to inform members about the outcomes from their travel by writing articles for the Journal. The Institute looks forward to hearing more from them in future issues.

**Paul Lane**

## 2003 ANZIF Conference highlights



*Yvette Dickinson, a fourth year BForSc student at the School of Forestry, was awarded the NZIF Undergraduate Scholarship.*



*Ian Barnes, IFA President, presents Tim Thorpe with a gift to mark the 75th Anniversary of the NZIF.*



*A feature of ANZIF was the attendance of 44 students, mainly from the University of Melbourne and the University of Canterbury, but with representatives from A.N.U., Southern Cross University and Lincoln University.*