

government” assistance. Most importantly it will provide the inspiration to get more trees in the ground.

6. The New Zealand Institute of Forestry - our role

At the recent section meetings some excellent ideas and viable options outside Pillar 2 have been put forward by members. As the body representing forestry professionals, not forest owners or land owners, the NZIF Council has to think carefully about the role it wants the NZIF to play in this debate. The section meetings have instructed us to be professional and independent.

Earlier in the week the NZIF met with forest owner and farm forester representatives to work towards a forestry sector view. The key messages were equity, flexibility, certainty and simplicity and a strong desire for

the environmental benefits of forestry to be recognised. Forestry is the solution, not the problem. Forestry has been painted in a bad light and the average citizen is unaware of the contribution that forestry makes to our economy and our environment.

I welcome the opportunity for the Institute to take part in the forWood promotional programme to increase public support for the forestry industry and boost the consumption of wood.

The forestry industry needs to get on the front foot fast.

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letters

Impact factor

Sir

In the February issue (2006), Hamish Levack proposed letting the weekly Newsletter absorb the NZJF. I have no objections to putting refereed scientific articles on the web soon after acceptance as this is already standard practice for a few journals. However, I would hate to see the hard copy issues replaced by an electronic Newsletter just to save money (the journal requires about 18% of NZIF expenses). Call me “old-school,” but I enjoy reading the NZJF four times a year and keep back issues on my shelf. In contrast, I cannot locate any of the electronic newsletters (on my computer) that are older than August 2004. Although I enjoy occasionally reading the electronic Newsletter, I would hate to see the end of a 50-year tradition. We have recently witnessed the last issue of the South African Forestry Journal (SAFJ) and I think it would be unfortunate to see that repeated with the NZJF.

One of the reasons given for SAFJ ceasing publication (after 68 years) was a decline in the number of manuscripts submitted from leading scientists. Many authors were bypassing the journal and opting for one of the 36 forestry journals listed in the Journal Citation Report. This journal published several numerical rankings of journals such as “impact factor” and “immediacy index.” The “impact factor” is a number that represents the average number of times a paper is cited during a 2-yr period. An “impact factor” of 2.0 means that, on average, a paper was cited twice (e.g. 160 cites/80 articles).

Twenty-two New Zealand journals are listed among the more than 6,000 journals monitored by Journal Citation Report but only North American and European forestry journals are their list. Therefore, just for fun, I used “Google Scholar” to calculate an “impact factor” for two NZ forestry journals. The NZJF ended up with 0.09 (i.e. 7/79) while the NZJFS value was 0.65 (i.e. 26/40). Out of 38 journals, this ranks NZJFS as 24th and NZJF last. Although the NZJF publishes only a handful of peer reviewed papers each year,

the editorials and commentaries count as “articles” and therefore lower the “impact factor.” Simply eliminating the editorials and features (which I say make the journal enjoyable to read) would raise the “impact factor” to 0.13 (4/30).

For this reason, I want to raise a red flag in regards to the goal of increasing the NZJF’s “impact factor.” Actions taken to increase this number could alter the content and readership of the journal and might alter the future behavior of editors, reviewers and authors. In my opinion, less than 9% of NZIF members (ie. those of us who work at universities) are interested in the numerical ranking of journals. Many forest managers have little interest in subscribing to journals with high impact factors. Highly cited papers typically contain academic jargon and complex equations that only an academician would love. In contrast, I contend forest managers enjoy reading interesting papers that impact their profession (such as the case with articles about “millennium forestry.”) However, these articles are rarely cited by professors. Therefore, an “impact factor” ranking of 1.9 does not mean the journal will have high impact on forest management. I believe journals with high impact factors are not found on most forest consultants’ bookshelves. I bet most foresters and professors cannot even name the Journal Citation Report’s top-ranked forestry journal - based on impact factor**.

On the other hand, university administrators, some government funding agencies and some professors are interested in the ranking of academic journals. Prior to 1989, they had to rely on subjective rankings to evaluate the performance of individuals and projects. Now objective rankings [published by the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI)] are used, in combination with publication numbers, to allocate research funds and salary increases. Sometimes these numbers are used to mislead administrators into thinking that the quality of a paper is similar to the “impact factor” of the host journal. Fortunately, many now realize that getting a forestry paper

published in a journal with an impact factor of 30 does not automatically mean the research quality is high or that the author's conclusions are valid.

The goal of increasing a journal's "impact factor" might cause some to attempt to manipulate the rank (see <http://chronicle.com/free/v52/i08/08a01201.htm> and Wall Street Journal article entitled "Science Journals artfully try to boost their rankings.") Some editors might place free issues on the web in hopes of attracting more readers and thus more citations. A few editors might want to change the name of the journal in hopes that a new name would attract highly cited manuscripts (this seems unlikely to me). I know of one case where an editor rejected a manuscript that did not include any citations from her journal. Some editors might accept highly controversial papers (containing poor methodology) in hopes others will cite the paper in rebuttals. In contrast, a well-written applied paper might be rejected if the subject matter was useful to managers but would likely not be cited by many university researchers. A reviewer might say..."This paper is well written but the subject is not a hot topic and therefore it is more suitable for publication in another journal." This could be doublespeak for - "This paper is suitable for publication in a journal with a lower impact factor." Instead of evaluating the content of

the manuscript, a rejection could be based on this "numbers game." To counter these actions, some authors might decide to submit manuscripts with an unusually high number of host-journal citations (e.g. one recent paper had 4 out of 5 citations from the host-journal). The author may hope that editors and reviewers might think twice about rejecting a manuscript that would help raise the journal's "impact factor."

In summary, I believe a journal's "impact factor" does not relate to the potential impact it has on forest management. This "numbers game" will continue to have an effect on university researchers, but I say it holds little importance for most NZIF members. I am concerned that trying to increase the "impact factor" will alter the format and make the journal less attractive. I hope that with dedicated work and persistence, the NZJF will continue to be a valuable forum for forestry professionals for the next 50 years.

David South

** The journal Agricultural and Forest Meteorology has the highest impact factor (2.46) among the forestry journals listed in Journal Citation Reports.

obituary

A rough diamond with valuable facets

Patrick Clyde Crequer

Whether in the jungles of the Pacific; S.E. Asia or in a Rotorua boardroom, Pat was able to present a practical solution for any knotty problem. No matter that the audience comprised lawyers or landowners, his point of view was invariably readily accepted. This valuable skill, together with a fearless optimism, made him a most successful consultant and Institute Member for 42 years. He gained his mensurational skills in National Forest Survey teams located in the Ureweras and South Westland. Under such experts as Stan Masters and Pat Duff he honed his skills in the most arduous conditions. Little wonder that the newly formed Kaingaroa Logging Company soon used him as a planning and assessment officer in the huge job of ensuring that the giant Tasman mill did not run out of raw material.

His rapport with Maori and other workers combined with his practical experience made him an ideal leader in a number of counties outside N.Z. looking to put their little-known forests under some form of sustainable management. He tramped the steep but tracked hills of Vanua Levu in Fiji for 2 years. This resulted in the setting up of a veneer mill which after 44 years is still producing. This is a far cry from the "cut out and get out" experience of so many Pacific Islands. Leading a 12 family team to Irian Jaya (West Papua) to build and operate a training sawmill in 1969 was perhaps his greatest challenge. Chartering and unloading a ship in

Dyapura they had to first remove McArthur's wartime junk off the beach, unload the priceless vehicles and building material with an armed guard on every load, before erecting their houses and the mill. It is difficult to imagine a N.Z. crew doing the same thing now. But Pat's organisational ability was such that all problems were overcome. Similar efforts at (Vanimo; Kaut; Milne Bay And Bougainville (All P.N.G.)) followed until he crossed a bridge too far - in South America, retiring in 2000.

His N.Z. legacy in Forestry is probably best remembered in the Crequer Cruising method which helped in the later development of MARVL. One of the last things he did on the day he died, was, with Tony Grayburn, to wrap up LIRA, an organisation he helped create and for a time chaired.

That a single man can achieve so much without the benefit of a University certificate, says a lot for N.Z. training or perhaps more for the measure of the man. Always fun to be with, he will be missed, with affection, by his many close friends.

John Groome