Waiariki Institute of Technology

New staff member strengthens Waiariki's Wood Technology Programme

Hank Bier
BE Hons (Civil), (Cantaur), MSc (Timber Structures), (London), DIC, MIPENZ

Hank Bier has joined Waiariki Institute of Technology School of Forestry, Wood Processing and Biotechnology, as Manager of the Wood Processing Development Project.

Hank is well known to the forest industry. Since graduating from Canterbury University with a BE Hons (Civil), he has worked in the NZ Forest Service as a design and construction engineer before spending 14 years at the Forest Research Institute as a Research Engineer. Hank than joined Carter Holt Harvey in various research and development roles, most recently as Manager of technical development of CHH Wood Products.

Hank joined Waiariki on 1st July. In his new role he will be working closely with Auckland and Canterbury Universities and FITEC to develop technical expertise and research capabilities in the wood processing industry.

New School of Forestry building opening

On 25th July the School of Forestry, Wood Processing and Biotechnology, which is part of Waiariki Institute of Technology, located in Rotorua, opened its new National Centre of Excellence for the Forest and Wood Industry. The building cost $1.7m and was opened by Hon Steve Chadwick on behalf of Hon Pete Hodgson, Minister for Tertiary Education and Research, Science and Technology.

This Centre was funded by the Tertiary Education Commission and is a partnership between Waiariki Institute of Technology, FITEC and the University of Auckland. The Centre will be equipped with software and technology to support industry training and research, particularly in the wood manufacturing sector.

Go to for further information: www.forestryschool.ac.nz

New Zealand School of Forestry, University of Canterbury

This Year has seen approximately 80 students enrolled in the undergraduate forestry degree programme with a further 25 students enrolled at postgraduate level. We have recently strengthened the staff with new appointments in Forest Engineering (Associate Professor Rien Visser and Simon Fairbrother) and one appointment in the area of Forest Economics (Dr David Evison). Rien and Simon have been building close links with industry in the forest operations area, and are also interested in increasing the emphasis on the biomass/biofuels area within our teaching and research. David has a strong commercial as well as forestry background and as such is interested from research point of view in applying forest economics to real-world problems, and from a teaching point of view in helping students to understand how to use economics to make better decisions in their forestry careers.

Our final year students have been heavily involved in finishing off their case course, which interestingly this year has considered the implications of carbon emissions/sequestration as a part of the broader forestry business sphere. We have just farewelled four third year students who are departing for exchanges with forestry departments at the University of British Columbia (UBC) and Virginia Tech (VT). The students going to UBC are accessing a range of wood science and business related papers, while the two departing for VT are accessing a range of papers in the broader natural resource management area that are not offered here at Canterbury. Two students returned to studies here in July, one who has completed a year long course of study looking at wood product development and wood products business. We continue as a School to encourage our students to go on exchange as they are able to access a broad range of papers that we cannot offer here (in particular in the wood science and products area), and we believe this provides for the injection of ideas from the northern hemisphere into the industry in New Zealand and Australia.

Wood Quality Initiative fosters collaboration between Scion and the School of Forestry

A contract from the Wood Quality Initiative to the School of Forestry and Scion Ltd. is promoting collaboration in research on wood quality. Gofred Sialumba, a PhD candidate will analyse wood samples from one of Scion's long-term site productivity trials to determine how well sonic testing can measure gradient in longitudinal shrinkage, a key factor affecting lumber stability, and also environmental factors that influence distributions of microfibril angle (MFA) within trees. MFA distribution affects lumber stability during drying and wood stiffness, two key variables that influence structural wood value. The 17 year-old experiment, located on Selwyn Plantation Board Ltd. land, had three factors: Harvest intensity; fertilization; and weed control. Mr Sialumba's study is being supervised by Associate Professor Euan Mason, Dr Peter Clinton, Dr Jonathan Harrington and Dr Michael Watt.