

Summing up 'Forestry in a Climate of Change'

Don Mead

Today (Monday 8 June), we have listened to 11 papers. About half of these dealt with the carbon trading scheme. Two covered woodfuels or bioenergy, while there was one each on a conservation research proposal, assessing community values and modeling. Two papers suggested that while we were in a state of change, nothing was changing! Of all these topics covered today the one on research into community values requires much more emphasis and it was good to hear that Scion had plans for this.

It was exciting to hear the new ideas and innovations! This is good for New Zealand and for New Zealand forestry. It shows the strength and expertise we have in this country and within our Institute. This research will surely continue. It was also refreshing to see members questioning and giving alternative views, both in some of the papers and as comments from the floor.

These papers will help us with some of the changes facing forestry in this country. These include carbon trading, living in a C restricted environment with the use of more woodfuels, changing social expectations of forestry and how our modeling and decision making need to adapt to the changing environment. As an aside, I agree with Euan Mason's suggestion that managers should start routinely measuring leaf area index.

The theme of our conference was 'Forestry in a Climate of Change'. However, there were several important topics that were not covered. We could have looked at the following:

- The impact on New Zealand forestry of the current economic upheaval and the rapidly changing Asian economic development. How should we adapt to these changes?
- The rapidly changing structure of New Zealand forestry both in terms of land ownership and lack of vertical integration. What should New Zealand's response to this be?
- The rapid world population growth is going to have massive impacts on resources such as food, oil, water, forestry products and non-woody forestry products. What does this imply? It was good to hear Peter Brown mention during the discussion of his paper that we are entering a period with an alignment of these issues. This subject needs a lot more attention.

On the second issue of the change of the structure of New Zealand forestry, it was, for example, mentioned that about 40% of plantations will be under Maori ownership. On my recent visit to Chile I was impressed by the health and vigour of their forest industry. They have not lost the vertical structure, with industry owning the land, managing



Peter Topping discusses his indigenous harvesting operation at the Conference field trip. Dave Evison.

the forests and processing plants. There is talk in Chile of planting another million ha of plantations and not primarily as woodfuels. After 15 years of discussion they have recently passed a Native Forest Law which will see up to 4.5 million ha of degraded and second-growth forest brought into management. It would be useful to compare the Chilean and New Zealand approaches and to see what we can learn. For example, are their different approaches to national forest policies?

Our Institute has the expertise to explore these massive changes. We should all be thinking more on these topics. That is the challenge that we should take from this conference.