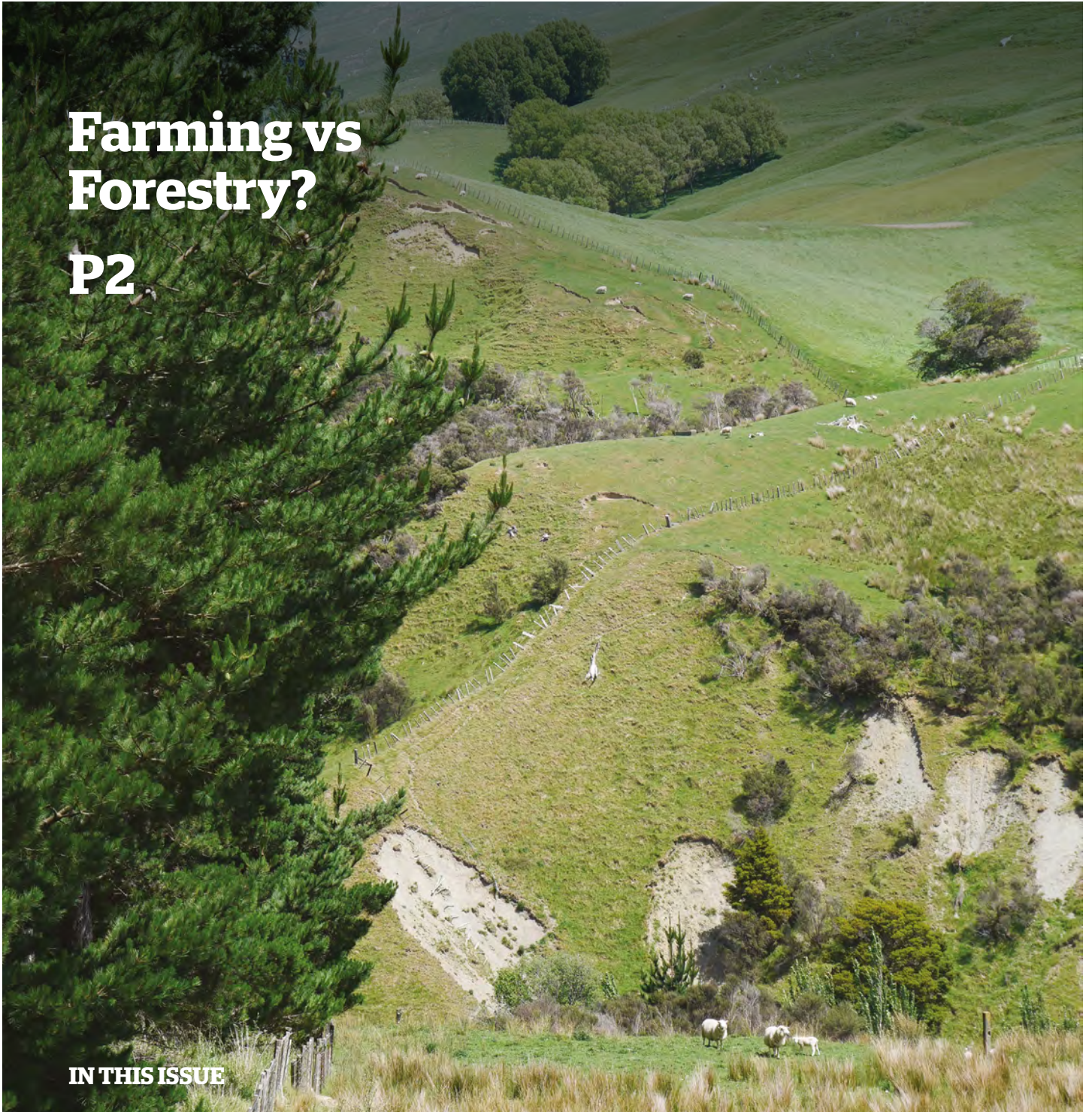


Bulletin

Spring 2019

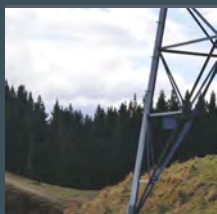
Farming vs Forestry? P2



IN THIS ISSUE

P4

The wires vs the forests – the ‘Lines’ case



P5

Cleaner fuel = higher shipping costs



P8

Export log disinfestation – deadline looms





Protestors can't see the wood for the trees

If we are to believe some campaigners and the news media there is an intense and catastrophic competition for land use in New Zealand at the moment.

Inflated and quite wrong stories of unfairly favoured foreign investment in forestry have left the public and landowners often confused and apprehensive about the future of hill country pastoral farming and the rural communities which service them.

But while there is huge change in the primary sector looming, the core of sheep and beef hill country farming is not going to disappear under what has been termed in the *Dominion Post* as 'a silent cathedral of pine trees'.

First the foreign ownership. The great majority of the sales over the past year have been sales of existing forests between different overseas companies. Since the Ministerial Directive was implemented a year ago there have been less than 9,000 hectares of approved sales of farmland for planting in forests. That represents a mere 0.1 percent of the total sheep and beef area in New Zealand.

The value of sales of dairy companies and dairy farms to foreign ownership has been about four times greater, without exciting anywhere as much media comment.

None of these sales are for carbon farming, despite repeated claims by *The Listener*, which imagines billions of dollars of such investment. The Overseas Investment Office requires foreign investors to harvest their logs – not leave the trees.

Indeed, it appears this past winter the total planting of bare land is quite considerable, especially along the East Coast to Wairarapa. We don't yet know exactly how much, but the majority is certainly New Zealanders making their choice to invest in a forest future.

To find the reason, it's unnecessary to go past a recent Beef + Lamb commissioned report of the Wairoa District. It concluded most of the sheep and beef properties there

are unable to compete with forestry in the long term.

The export returns from forestry, per hectare, per year, are twice that of the average of all types of farms.

But most farmers will not convert to forestry. They may follow the standard model and plant out the more marginal parts of the farm. In the meantime, a continuing cash flow from meat and wool is vital to balance their books.

However, for some farms the reality is that the whole property is unviable in both economic and erosion susceptibility terms.

Indeed, harvest forestry is retreating from New Zealand's most vulnerable landscapes as environmental rules and prudence put an end to the type of harvesting which may cause debris flows downstream. Forests will move to the land described by some commentators as 'productive', which is code for a countryside with animals farmed on it.

But forests are productive too. While there are clear environmental benefits of forestry, that in no way makes it unprofitable, especially noting that the less erosion prone country is also the least expensive to extract the logs from.

It is also true that the major forest planting areas are already summer dry and severe droughts are more likely to devastate farms here as climate change seriously cuts in during the next 20 years (see NIWA's 'Fifty Shades of Brown' scenario for some parts of New Zealand on opposite page).

The world also needs more environmentally friendly building and paper-based products. Our forests can deliver both.

Evidence is mixed on the relative employment sheep and beef farming provide compared with forestry.

For both industries, over the years, increasing mechanisation and amalgamation has reduced the workforce. It's a worldwide trend.

“THE EXPORT RETURNS FROM FORESTRY, PER HECTARE, PER YEAR, ARE SUBSTANTIALLY ABOVE THAT OF THE AVERAGE OF ALL TYPES OF FARMS.”

Statistics NZ figures indicate forests provide more jobs per the same area of sheep and beef land.

Then there are the complaints about a government subsidy favouring forestry, either through the One Billion Tree Programme or through carbon credits.

Many people are not aware that half of the BTP is reliant on replanting forest land after harvest, for which no government grants are given. For the new planting, grants are only available to plant part of a farm, and no grant is available to large scale forestry – as simple as that.

The value of carbon, through the Emissions Trading Scheme, is meant to be high enough to reduce New Zealand's net



DAVID RHODES
CHIEF EXECUTIVE, FOA

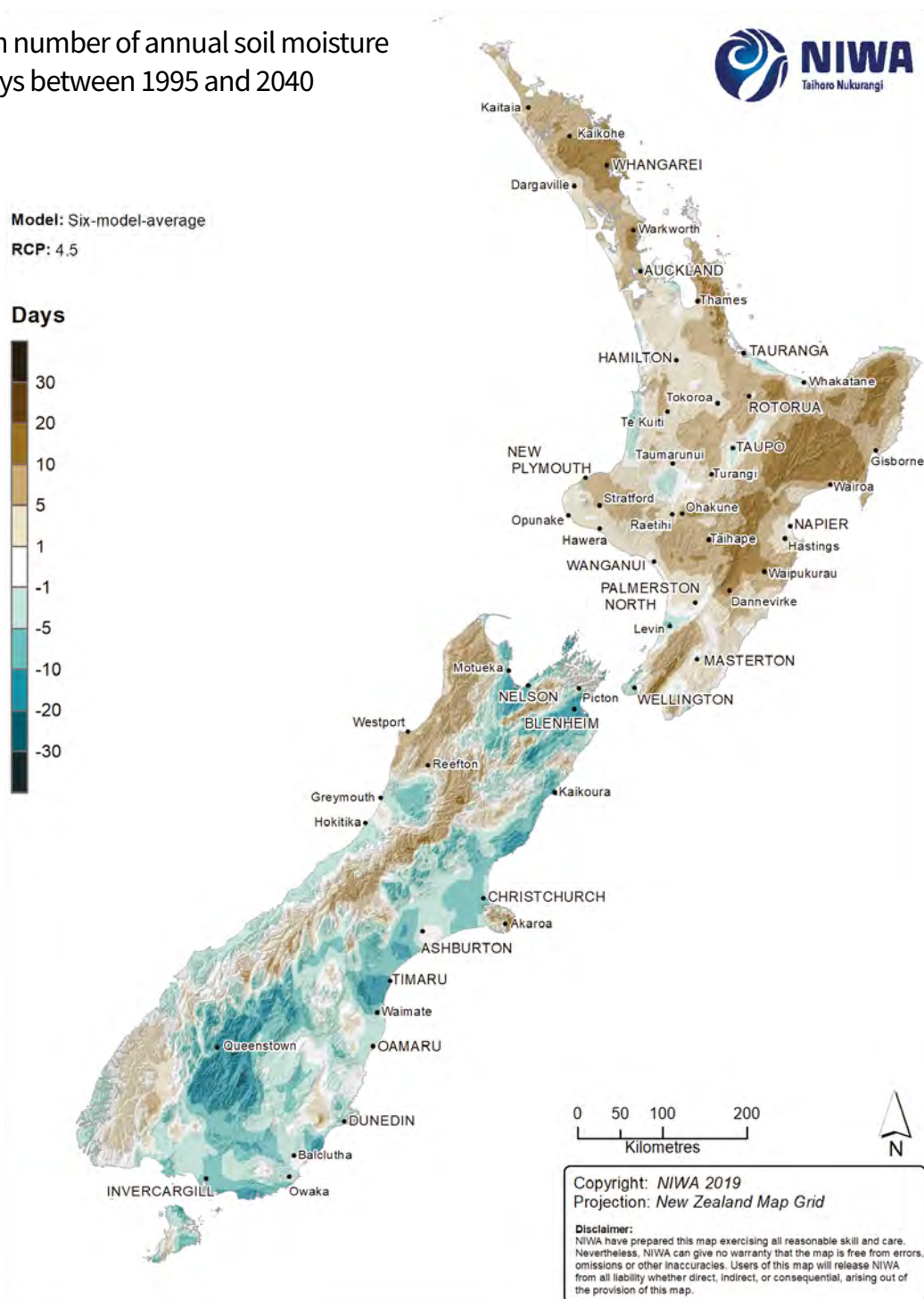
greenhouse gas emissions. The price of carbon is in part a tool to favour a land use which reduces our net emissions.

How much land is necessary for this is hugely driven by the government of the time. A government policy which provides incentives and tools to reduce agriculture's greenhouse gas emissions, and in parallel provides the means for forestry to more rapidly sequester emissions, and off less land, is a policy which would benefit both those whose livelihoods come from forestry and from agriculture.



Above: 50 Shades of Green climate change denier in Wellington, 14th of November.

Change in number of annual soil moisture deficit days between 1995 and 2040





High Court finds forestry not 'natural'

The September judgment of the High Court in Wellington ordered four forestry companies to pay Unison Networks \$195,000 in damages.

This represents a substantial shift in liability for landowners towards others using that land.

Judge Rebecca Ellis found that plantation forestry was not a natural use of land and so damage to a utility owned by another party on that land came under the scope of the 1868 English case of *Rylands v Fletcher*.

Counsel for the companies, Ian Thain says the door has opened for parties which don't have ownership of the land to claim damages against landowners even when the landowners haven't done anything wrong.

Unison took the case against the companies because on four occasions between 2015 and 2018 trees fell in storms onto Unison's Esk Feeder line at Tutira in Hawkes Bay cutting the electricity supply to about 380 Unison customers in the area.

The line was erected sometime in the late 1960s and early 1970s and the land was planted by Nottingham Forest Trustee Ltd, Roger Dickie (NZ) Ltd, Forest Management (NZ) Ltd and Nottingham Forest Partnership, variously in the 1990s, leaving a 15 metre gap on each side of the power line.

The law in these situations is a combination of regulations under the Electricity Act 1992 and under tort law; nuisance, negligence and a hybrid of the two branches known as the rule in *Rylands v Fletcher*.

The Electricity (Hazards from Trees) Regulations 2003 sets out a clear growth limit zone into which foresters can't allow their trees to encroach, in this case 2.5 metres.

However, nuisance law is additional to such regulations and comes into play when there is a claim for compensation, in this instance by Unison for damage to its electricity line which it blamed on the forest owners.



Unison had complained about some of the trees in the forest on a number of occasions, that the regulations were a minimum distance requirement only, and that it had a right to claim in nuisance for damage to its line.

FMNZ responded that it would remove all trees within fall distance of the powerline if necessary, but it expected the forest owners to be compensated for doing so. FMNZ also said Unison had no interest in the land sufficient to give rise to a claim in nuisance.

Unison issued proceedings for damages and to compel the forests owners to top or remove existing trees. It claimed the forest owners had allowed their trees to grow tall enough to fall onto its electricity line.

The proceeding under *Rylands v Fletcher* required Unison to prove that the forest owners had allowed an escape of something harmful from the land due to a non-natural use and that this escape was foreseeable by the companies.

Despite Unison choosing not to pursue this argument in its closing submissions to the court, Judge Ellis held on to it on the basis that she was convinced Unison's interest in the forest land was sufficient to rule in its favour through the rule.


Judge Ellis was similarly dismissive of the companies' point of view that for Unison to be successful under *Rylands v Fletcher* it had to prove the companies were at fault. The companies said *Rylands v Fletcher* was not proven because it needs an 'unnatural activity' and growing trees is natural. Besides, it was storms, not the foresters, which caused the trees to fall.

She rejected Unison's case that the companies should be forced to reduce the risk of further tree falls with an injunction under negligence, partly because she thought they knew they would have to pay if it happened again anyway.

Unison is appealing against this, arguing it is entitled to an injunction, as well as wanting to broaden the judge's finding on the narrow scope of *Rylands v Fletcher*.

The companies have also appealed the judgement. Steve Bell from FMNZ says the judge has unfairly distinguished a small number of trees as 'natural' as against commercial forests planted for profit, regardless of the current tree regulations.

Charting challenging times ahead for logs



An extra \$10 per tonne of freight rates is to come off foresters' bottom lines next year as new international environmental shipping rules come into effect.

A new International Maritime Organisation (IMO) MARPOL convention – Annex VI of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships – comes into effect on 1 January 2020.

It aims to reduce sulphur emissions by 80 percent from marine shipping. This requires international shippers to switch all of their vessels to low sulphur fuels (LSF) with a maximum sulphur content of 0.5 percent from the current 3.5 percent cap.

Shipping companies are readying themselves, with some retro-fitting 'scrubber' technology to clean the ships' exhausts which means they can still burn the high sulphur fuel. Others are converting their vessels to run on sulphur-free liquified natural gas. Both options are expensive, however, and it is thought the majority, including log ships, will switch to LSF.

As a result, marine fuel costs globally are likely to balloon by 50 percent annually from next year, then settle back from 2022 as the production of LSF rises and more emissions abatement technology is introduced. The extra costs – at least in the short- to medium-term, will be passed through to customers, if market conditions allow.

New Zealand has yet to ratify the treaty – it is scheduled to do so by early 2021. At this stage, explains Rayonier Matariki Forests' (RMF) shipping adviser Cecil Grant, domestic coastal shipping does not need to comply. However, he says, many of the ships visiting

to pick up the forestry sector's \$7 billion plus of exports by 2022 are flagged to countries that have already ratified it and those shippers have been warning customers of ocean freight rate rises.

"While RMF strongly supports moves to reduce emissions, this does come at a real cost to the forest grower," explains its marketing director Chris Rayes. "We had been advised ocean freight costs will rise by about US\$200 per twenty foot equivalent unit (TEU), but recent developments mean it might actually be a lot less."

"At the beginning of this year, we roughly calculated this would mean around US\$10-12 extra in costs per cubic metre shipped," he says.

More recently, Mobil advised it will have a tank of LSF at the Port of Tauranga, one of the larger North Island ports for log exports, which recorded in its latest annual report an increase in log volumes to 7.1 million tonnes through its docks in the year ended June 2019. Log ships will now be able to refill from there, if required, for return north-bound journeys, says Grant. With more fuel now readily available here, RMF now thinks the increase will drop to around US\$5-6/m³ (at the time of writing, NZ\$7.80-9.45/m³).

"While that doesn't sound much, these freight costs all come straight off the bottom line," he says.

In addition, Grant says, New Zealand has been enjoying relatively low freight rates in the early part of this year, thanks to vessels seeking northbound cargoes for Asia, because of the drought on the east coast of Australia. The "dynamic nature of shipping", however, means that, should the drought break, the favourable rates disappear. Compounding this, recently ship owners have been chasing more profitable business in the Atlantic, on the east coast of South America and in the US Gulf, continuing to underpin higher freight rates.



"WE'RE IN DANGER OF PRICING OURSELVES OUT OF THE MARKET IF WE ALLOW COSTS TO CONTINUE TO ESCALATE."

The rise in international fuel prices, and potential strong demand for diesel, is also likely to be reflected at the domestic New Zealand fuel pump, increasing the costs of land-based log cartage and harvesting. These have already been steadily increasing over the past four years owing to the increasing harvest, labour shortages, and increasing health and safety and environmental regulation and compliance. Greenhouse gas emissions will have to be priced in too.

Added to that is the sudden log market correction with the ever-volatile prices rolling further downwards.

"New Zealand needs to be a low cost supplier," maintains Rayes. "We're in danger of pricing ourselves out of the market if we allow costs to continue to escalate."

He says the forestry sector "goes through these cycles pretty regularly," and has seen lots of peaks and troughs. Over half of RMF production goes to the domestic market, which does not have the capacity to use all of the logs and grades available.

"We will be exporting the balance to Asia as usual, but getting less for it in the short-term and will be looking to trim our costs wherever we can."

He is charting challenging times ahead for log exports.

"WE HAD BEEN ADVISED OCEAN FREIGHT COSTS WILL RISE BY ABOUT US \$200 PER TWENTY FOOT EQUIVALENT UNIT (TEU), BUT RECENT DEVELOPMENTS MEAN IT MIGHT ACTUALLY BE A LOT LESS."



Life after GCFF

The challenge has now been thrown back to forest companies to take advantage of the opportunities as the huge pine research project comes to a close.

For the past six years the Growing Confidence in Forestry’s Future (GCFF) programme has transformed the management potential of *Pinus radiata* from a somewhat standard tree into a selection of powerful genetic devices capable of being finely adapted to, and selected to flourish in, a whole range of managed environments.

Trial plots of various pine varieties established by the Forest Research Institute, going back as early as 1987, have been used to study the growth, yield and wood quality from the interaction of the trees’ genetics, their management and environment.

Six subsequent accelerator trials (trials designed to test the limits of tree growth from site preparation, weed control, genetics and fertiliser applications) have given much further insight into productivity and responses to precision management.

Large scale trials to test what are hoped to be the most advanced genetics are also in the ground to test the theories of what seed-lines will actually do the best – and where.

The parallel development and availability of remote sensing technology over the past few years, such as drones and satellites, has meant a faster, cheaper and much more thorough discovery and use of analytic tools.

Far more trees and their contrasting growing environments can be accurately examined and compared using fly-overs than was ever possible with ground crews stumbling round and hoping to find the best trees to measure and take genetic samples from.

By studying many trees in many environments GCFF has now made it possible to select trees which will do well in the more challenging of aspects, soils or climate. Other seed-lines can be selected which will do even better in the most favourable environments, including getting a quicker rotation.

It is no longer a matter of which trees are better, it’s now becoming where they will do best. In effect, *Pinus radiata* is evolving to be a selection of varieties precisely matched

to the environment they will be planted in, or selected for potential particular end use requirements.

For instance, it has become possible to select a variety which will do well if it is planted on drier sites, while others can be customised to types of soil, the average or seasonality of rainfall or whether they are intended to be pruned.

There’s the potential down the track for specific genetics which would be ideal for a tree planted on a 5 degree north-facing slope, having 2,500 hours of sunshine a year, in deep high organic alluvial soil, with 500 mm of rain a year, with a January mean temperature of 18 degrees, and designed for a pruned regime and 23 year harvest.

There would be different genes if the tree was to be planted on a 30 degrees south-facing slope, 1,800 hours of sun a year, in shallow clay soil, 3,000 mm of rain, a January mean of 12 degrees, and an unpruned regime to be harvested when convenient for management.

GCFF has also incorporated developing site-specific fertiliser recommendations, calibrated for how much and when the nutrients would be best applied. Fertiliser application for plantation forestry has never been high in comparison with the use by other primary industries, but GCFF studies have shown that targeted applications have benefits.

Of course, understanding the end product is vital as well. GCFF has included research

“The GCFF programme has been forest growers’ flagship research programme for six years. The advances in remote sensing, wood quality assessment, and understanding of the interactions of site, genetics and management on productivity and crop value are impressive and we are already seeing forest growers, large and small implementing the outcomes from this work. GCFF demonstrates the value of a long-term research programme through a partnership between industry and government, in this case the Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment.”

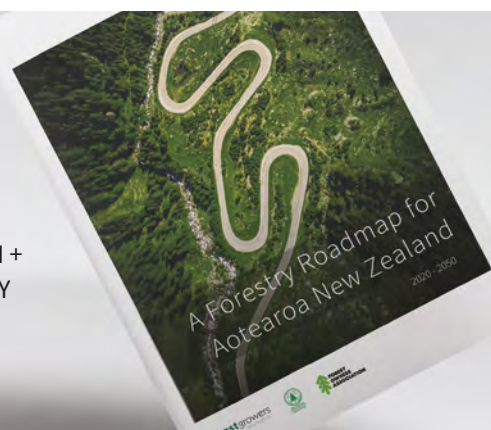
Russell Dale – FGR Manager

on the timber qualities which have come from different trees, locations and management, in particular trying to understand the variations within a tree and between trees. Processors do not like variation and so any way to increase the uniformity of production is desirable.

It can’t really be said that GCFF was a series of eureka moments, but rather meticulously building and incorporating knowledge of a hitherto ubiquitous, incredibly fast growing and forgiving commercial tree species, into a much better understood, customised and productive future engine for our industry.

GOAL 1

DOUBLED TREE GROWTH + PRODUCTION EFFICIENCY





2019 Forest Grower Awards

The seventh awards recognising forest science were conducted as part of the Forest Growers Research Conference in Wellington in October.

The award to the phenotyping team, for ‘science of international quality’, by scientists from Scion and Canterbury University, marked the conclusion of the largest ever Forest Growers Levy Trust funded project.

Other individual award winners included;



Dr Amanda Matson, won the Communications award for her work on nutrient movement in forest soils.



“For me, the challenge of communicating is often that I’m trying to describe processes that no-one can actually see and therefore that they haven’t spent much time thinking about.

I have all of this information to share, and I know that if I can just get people to see that underground world the way I see it, they would be as excited as I am to discover what’s going on: how nutrients are cycling, how management decisions change that, how much we can predict, things we can’t predict, why we can’t predict them, as well as new and different ways to look at these processes and understand them.

Then the second part of the challenge is finding a way to link my story to the audience and their interests and background, so they can see real connections to the wider world and things that are important to them.

If I can succeed at that – convincing people that this research is both fascinating and ultimately useful – then I feel I’ve communicated well.”



Research Award for Research Participation and Implementation, went to Hamish Macpherson.

Hamish Macpherson is the Operations Project Manager for PF Olsen. His award was for his work assisting the development of a helicopter grapple to safely remove slash from riversides after harvest where it is a risk of becoming part of a debris flow.

He originally came from north of Gisborne, and so was devastated to see the damage caused by the June 2018 Tolaga Bay storm and set about finding a way to reduce risk of slash in rivers causing downstream damage.

His research led him to Helihawk Ltd, experts in helicopter attachments and operations, and together with Forest Growers Research, developed a helicopter slash grapple.

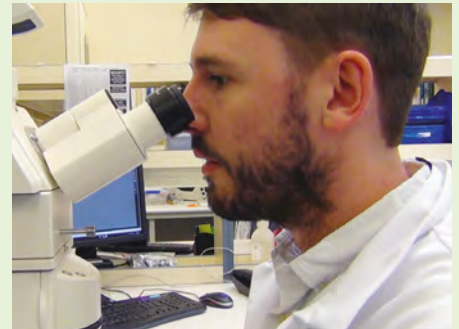


“Taking a collaborative approach to developing an industry-changing innovation, that has significant environmental outcomes, has been very rewarding. I am thankful for the support of Forest Growers Research, Ron Parker from Helihawk Ltd and PF Olsen management who also backed the idea.

To remain sustainable, our industry needs to be constantly looking for new ways to perform. I look forward to working on future innovations resulting in better operational outcomes.”



Dr Stuart Fraser, Young Scientist, for his plant pathology work. He sent this message to the Awards by video.



“I’m really stoked to be getting the Forest Growers Young Scientist Award. I was really honoured to hear that I’d been nominated, so to win it is incredible.

I’ve got to apologise for not being able to be at the Forest Research Conference. Unfortunately, I’m in Brazil visiting researchers at the University of São Paulo learning about problems they’re having with Phytophthora on a range of systems and myrtle rust as well.

I’ve got to give a massive shout-out to my team who’ve been really supportive and the hard work that they do. And a shout-out to my managers who’ve given me the space to grow and develop.

I don’t think research, applied research especially, is really worthwhile without working closely in a partnership with stakeholders.”



Down to the wire on log fumigation deadlines

There's been a \$22 million plus effort over the past few years to find an alternative to the present regime of using methyl bromide to fumigate export logs but, with less than one year to go before the methyl bromide cut-off, the options are stuck in the regulatory process.

Fumigation with methyl bromide is an import requirement for New Zealand logs exported to China and India. But the immediate future of continuing access to these vital markets is in doubt.

Log and pole exports to China were worth \$2.9 billion in the year to June, and the destination of some 76 percent of our total log exports.

India was responsible for taking six percent of our log exports, worth \$324 million.

Either extending the use of methyl bromide, or preferably an alternative, is vital for access to these markets.

China requires New Zealand exporters to use methyl bromide to fumigate above-deck log cargo. India requires all our logs to be fumigated with methyl bromide. The chemical is effective in killing a range of pathogens and invertebrate pests. Some 600 tonnes a year is used in New Zealand.

Nearly a third of all our log exports are fumigated with methyl bromide under tarpaulins on the wharves.

In 1992, New Zealand, on signing the Montreal Protocol on ozone depleting substances, agreed to restrict the use of methyl bromide. The Protocol exempts phytosanitary use, but encourages countries to seek alternatives and to reduce emissions into the atmosphere.

Various recapture technologies have been trialled extensively since then. None has been capable of timely absorption or destruction of all of the remaining methyl bromide and some methods produce contaminated waste.

The Recapture Obligation was imposed in 2010 by the then Environmental Risk Management Authority which set residue discharge at a worker safety level of five parts per million and required the



technology to achieve this to be developed and in use by 28 October 2020.

Extensive work by Stakeholders in Methyl Bromide Reduction (STIMBR) and others since 2009 has still not found any way to achieve beyond 80 percent recapture under tarpaulins and so well below the required recapture target.

Likewise, the logistics of recapturing methyl bromide used to fumigate ship holds is challenging.

Recommendations of using a dose at half the current rate, while still effective, is not yet accepted by either China or India, and would not solve the recapture challenge.

An effective fumigant alternative to methyl bromide is ethanedinitrile (EDN). Its manufacturer, Draslovka, applied to the Environmental Protection Authority to use EDN in July 2017. The EPA is still sitting on a decision and time has probably run out for getting subsequent import approvals and consents under the RMA, before the methyl bromide recapture obligation cuts in.

STIMBR has applied for a modified reassessment to the EPA to allow an 80 percent recapture under tarpaulin. This would need

an investment of millions of dollars invested in plant. But it would be wasted if the EPA declined to accept the technically achievable target.

Time may have run out, even if the EPA agreed in the next few weeks to either application.

This is most unlikely. The latest EPA step is to defer any hearing on the methyl bromide reassessment until at least the end of January.

Without resolution, the market to India would be shut down. These lower grade logs would go to China instead, which doesn't usually want them.

For China itself, the trade would be reduced to logs which are either debarked or stored below-deck and fumigated with another fumigant during sailing.

A loading restriction to below-deck fumigation would need more ships to maintain the export volume and probably there are not enough available.

The cost of fewer logs on more vessels, and the price effect of diverted Indian cargoes to China, is likely to be \$750 million per year.



Launch of nursery biosecurity standard on track for April 2020

The discovery of myrtle rust in indigenous seedling plants in multiple plant nurseries in 2017 gave an impetus to finalising and implementing the Plant Biosecurity Standard.

The standard aims to strengthen a production point which had the potential to be a biosecurity weak link, and to improve nursery plant health generally at the same time.

Nurseries which adopt the standard are systematically reducing the general likelihood that pests, such as plant pathogens, will harm their production and they are also aiming to prevent pests spreading on plants being delivered to and from nurseries.

This has especially been a problem in nurseries overseas where Phytophthora and other plant pathogens have inadvertently been moved around countries and sometimes into conservation areas when the infected plants have been used for restoration work.

Modules are being developed to target specific pests, such as the myrtle rust and Phytophthora modules. The Phytophthora module will initially be used to prevent the spread of the pathogen causing kauri dieback. Currently there is no system which assures Phytophthora is not being spread in kauri nursery plants.

The Phytophthora module could also be used for commercial plantation forest nurseries, if there was a specific Phytophthora which needed to be controlled.

The main nursery standard has been piloted in more than 20 nurseries. Some adjustments have been made already to accommodate

forest nurseries, which are often bare-root nurseries and have different requirements to container nurseries.

Consultation is ongoing with the Forest Nursery Growers Association and the intention is to launch the Standard in April 2020.

FOA, and in turn forestry companies, will be asked to sign on to a “Buyers Accord” that would provide a market incentive for nurseries to become certified to the new standard. It was thought that this voluntary approach would work better, at least in the short-term, rather than to implement regulations to get nurseries to use the standard.

Alongside this initiative, the Forest Industry Biosecurity Levy will be ready to be implemented in 2020, to fund the industry’s contribution to any qualifying incursion being managed under the Government Industry Association (GIA) Deed.

FORESTRY HAS STAKE IN FRESHWATER POLICY REFORM

The government’s proposals for improving freshwater quality have sent shockwaves throughout New Zealand farming communities.

The proposals are so wide ranging that forestry is bound to be caught up in the result.

Farmers should have seen the plans coming after the Labour Party campaigned in the 2017 election on cleaning up waterways. But the uncompromising, structured, wide-ranging and short-timetable proposals were still a shock to the pastoral industry.

The discussion document specifically cited forestry for its ‘key role to play in protecting New Zealand’s water resources.’ It also proposes that the recently introduced National Environmental

Standards for Plantation Forestry would be reviewed to ensure consistency with the new freshwater policies.

The forest industry finds some common ground with hill country farmers, who support the policy of requiring the major emitters, such as dairy and horticulture, to reduce their impact, rather than adopting the option to allow these existing dischargers to maintain their baseline levels and in effect allow high polluting practices to be rewarded.

The proposed suspended sediment bottom lines will pose a challenge for some foresters on clay rich soils during the harvest period, but good practice in combination with

meeting the Permitted Activity standards in the National Environmental Standards – Plantation Forestry should see most others compliant.

The major end result of the reforms, whatever they eventually turn out to be, could be hill country farmers simply doing their arithmetic. MfE estimates compliance costs, including riparian planting, for a typical sheep and beef farm, would be \$137,500 over ten years. Such farmers may well decide their property’s future lies with planting trees.

New alphabets in forest industry

ROVE – Education Minister, Chris Hipkins’, shake up of New Zealand’s industry education will mean a new set of institutional names for forest industry training.

The government’s Reform of Vocational Education will lead to between six and seven industry governed bodies. They are the Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) which will replace the existing 11 Industry Training Organisation (ITOs) and 16 polytechnics. Hipkins aims to have legislation passed by next April and the WDCs established by June the following year.

Instead of polytechnics independent of each other, the government plans a network overseen by the New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology (NZIST) to arrange the training and assessment.

As an interim step there will be Centres of Vocational Excellence (COVEs) which are broader collections of people with an interest in vocation training. There will be a COVE for the primary industry.

The exact structure and function is still being defined.

Then there’s the Regional Skills Leadership Groups (RSLGs) which advise the existing Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) about specific regional training skill needs.

Under the new system the present distinction between funding of on and off job training is abolished.

The main forest industry groups, including owners and contractors, proposed a forest industry skills body under this structure, to replace delivery of training through Competenz, but was rebuffed by the government.

Forest industry groups now see the best way forward as coming under the Primary Industry WDC as part of a food and fibre

grouping, rather than the industry trying to fit into a manufacturing dominated WDC. Wood Processing is likely to go with the Manufacturing WDC.

It is a priority that the transition to a WDC structure does not disrupt either current or training in the immediate future with effectively a continuing ITO operation through the next two years.

Alongside the ROVE the forest industry is working on a Forestry Workforce Action Plan, including for the establishment and silviculture components. This is now out with the wider forest industry for feedback. This Action Plan sits within a wider Food and Fibre Workforce Plan for the larger primary sector led by an Establishment Group including the forest industry.

Twilight zone in forests proposed for indigenous biodiversity

The government is proposing a new legal category of Plantation Forest Biodiversity Areas (PFBA) to bridge what it sees as a gap between the National Environmental Standards – Plantation Forestry (NES-PF) and the Special Natural Areas (SNAs) outside of plantation forests which are specifically designed to protect rare indigenous flora and fauna.

The concept is revealed in the just released discussion document for a National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity (NPS-IB).

It took eight years of consultation between the forest industry and officials to finalise the NES-PF and it only became operational last year.

But the NES-PF is already under review, and affected by the September freshwater policy proposals (see page 9).

All these policy standards and statements are under the Resource Management Act and therefore need to be consistent. This signals considerable ongoing uncertainty for the forest industry.

The discussion document says PFBA are to protect ‘significant’ indigenous wildlife in a plantation forest, which otherwise would be classified as SNAs.

The NPSBs will ‘ensure’ that harvesting, which is ‘likely not possible in many parts of the country’ under a SNA, will be possible with a NPSIB, just so long as harvesting is managed to reduce adverse effects on, and will ‘maintain long-term populations of threatened or at-risk indigenous flora over the course of consecutive rotations’.

The discussion document also points to the fact that wildlife moves, and threatened and endangered species

and their predators do not confine themselves to the SNAs.

Other than the uncertainties of a completely new concept in the PFBA, perhaps the greatest industry concern is that the government intends to indefinitely throw back policy and rule making around the PFBA to the vagaries of local government.

The very reason the forest industry first embraced the NES-PF a decade ago was to reduce the contradictions, confusion, expense and time of dealing with a multitude of local governments.

It seems we are back where we started.



Let's stop another Pigeon Valley fire

Wildfires in forest plantations, other than being inherently dangerous for fire fighters, can cause significant economic loss, often across many properties.



Be a good neighbour

You can reduce your risk by playing an advocacy role in your community – make sure you're educated about fire prevention and promote fire permits and the safe use of machinery among your neighbours.



Discourage illegal activities

Arson is now a major cause of forest fires in New Zealand. Be vigilant and report suspicious behaviour or report cause-unknown small fires to the Police or Fire and Emergency New Zealand.

Keeping the understory of edge trees clear of flammable materials (such as thin to waste) on public road edges also mitigates risk of suspicious fires. Planting or encouraging less flammable native species at high risk sites is also recommended.

Find out more at: <https://fireandemergency.nz/farms-rural-properties-and-rural-businesses/landscaping-fire-safety>



Forest operations

Fire and Emergency encourages forest owners to adopt the Forest Owners and Farm Forestry Associations' 'Forest Fire Risk Management Guidelines'. These guidelines provide a process that a forest owner can follow to reduce the risk of a wildfire damaging their investment.

They can be found at: <https://www.nzfoa.org.nz/resources/file-libraries-resources/fire/671-forest-fire-risk-management-guidelines-1/file>

For free advice from a wildfire specialist call your FENZ Regional Office.



Summer is a risky time for our forests.

Sparks from machinery can cause forest fires. Before working outdoors, learn how to do it safely at www.checkitsalright.nz



The New Zealand Forestry Bulletin is published three times a year by the New Zealand Forest Owners Association.

Please acknowledge the New Zealand Forest Owners Association as the source when republishing stories or abstracts from the Bulletin.

Publication date 6 December 2019.

New Zealand Forest Owners Association

93 The Terrace
PO Box 10986, Wellington
Tel: +64 4 473 4769

Website: www.nzfoa.org.nz
Email: nzfoa@nzfoa.org.nz