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## COMMERCIAL THINNING FOR WOODCHIPS FOR PAPER PULP

This year we have tested the potential to commercially thin our 5Ha blue gum plantation for conversion to wood chips for paper pulp. This plantation has been planted in 1997.

A market exists for thinnings from eucalypt plantations to be converted into wood chips for paper manufacture in Japan because eucalypt wood pulp produces quality paper.

To meet this market eucalypt trees need to be cut down and debarked then cut to length and loaded on trucks for shipment to Geelong for chipping and export.



A contractor, who has the equipment to cut, debark and load logs, was engaged to conduct this trial.

The results of the trial can be summarized as follows.

1. It was uneconomic to use logs for pulp less than 20cm in diameter. This is because the time taken to process these small diameter logs was too long (the contractor cannot process sufficient tonnes per hour to cover his costs). These trees, less than 20cm, are best fallen and cut up for firewood.

2. Logs greater than 20cm diameter were economic to process for pulp. These debarked logs were loaded on trucks (approx. 30 tonnes per truck) for transport to Geelong. In all, some 20 trucks were loaded and despatched.
3. Trees with poor conformation and not suitable for saw logs were also felled at the same time and extracted for firewood.

The final result was a thinned plantation, at low cost, with only those trees with the potential to achieve good quality saw logs in the future remaining.

For further details contact Paul Hobby Plantation Management Services 0427400441 or Chris Tuck 0419337923.

**Chris Tuck Alexandra**



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## FROM THE CHAIR

I thought it an opportune time to bring together some of my views in the present environment of fears of global warming, and possible measures to encourage the locking up of carbon and the trading of carbon credits. There have been differences between those that have signed the Kyoto Agreement and countries like the United States of America and Australia who have not. That is not to say that both the USA and Australia are moving towards a cleaner environment. One of the issues involves the fact that carbon credits evaporate on the felling of a plantation under Kyoto. An argument is being pushed by Weyerhaeuser that some credits should remain if the fallen timber is converted into furniture, building products, etc. Regardless, the need for sawlog plantation timber in Australia continues to increase as we lock up State forests and need to replace imported timber.

FFORNE has been approached by some interested parties who would like control of the carbon content of our plantations. At this stage, only NSW has a carbon trading facility for their plantations. There is no doubt that an annual fee for carbon credits could be attractive for growers who could elect to only commit one year in advance. Another proposal wanted to lock up the carbon credits in perpetuity and have control over what and when plantations were harvested. To me, this is unsatisfactory as I believe over time, carbon credits will have considerable value.

The Federal Budget contained some modifications to managed investment schemes (MIS) which could be positive for saw log plantations. There have been lobbies to Canberra to allow investors to be able to sell their timber lots after 8

years and retain their initial tax deduction. The Budget did better, allowing the sale of lots after 4 years. Prior to this, the deduction was lost unless the woodlot is held to harvest. Also in the Budget, the 13 month rule for an MIS has been extended to 18 months, but the trade off is the tax deduction in the first tax year is reduced to \$6500 per hectare, and the balance of the cost of the investment in the second year. Some schemes sell at \$6500 per woodlot, with 2 woodlots to the hectare, which may encourage investors to look elsewhere.

I would like to encourage fellow FFORNE members to talk to neighbours or other

farmers to encourage them to look at the plantation model for the future. Invite them along to our next open day. We need to talk more, as not only the benefits of environment are good, but a woodlot gains value every day.

As an aside, I planted E nitens in another 3.5 hectares in a small block in 2002.

Last year, with a big mulcher, we took out every second row and mulched the whole lot back into the ground. Last week, we did a thinning process again with the mulcher, with a few too big to mulch. This method, I believe, has greatly reduced the costs of management of this block. My 1998 plantations were thinned by chain saw then the thinnings carted out and stacked for firewood. Had I have done the latest method, I believe I would have more than halved the cost. The trees in the 3.5 hectares are booming.

Should you have any experiences that you think can benefit us, please let us know. Lets hope we get some heavy rain soon.

Best wishes **John Goldsmith**



*The FFORNE Board  
l-r Chris Tuck, Philippa Noble, John Goldsmith, Peter Houghton and Angus Howell. Missing are Andrew Walpole and Rob Richardson*

## **THE GENIE MAKES EVEN HIGHER PRUNING EASY**

In 2003 we had about 1000 of our trees pruned to 6 m using a ladder, harness and loppers, and were looking down the barrel at another two thousand to go. The need to hug the tree when using a ladder, coming into close contact with the ants and spiders was not always appealing, particularly in summer. We also saw that on parts of our property, many of the irrigated trees seemed to be reaching for the stars, with another 6 m log possible above the first.

We half-heartedly kept an eye out for a machine that could possibly reach for the higher prune. The introduction of new "Working from Heights" legislation spurred us on. We finally found a machine that we thought would do the job just fine, and purchased a 4-wheel-drive Genie Z34 diesel powered Boomlift which could be driven from the 2 man basket standing 10.5 meters above the ground.

It has been fantastic, safe and fun to use. Once the numerous control levers are mastered (which is pretty quick as you soon learn to go the direction required) pruning is a breeze and no license is required for this machine.

Going up 12 m in the middle of an open paddock is pretty challenging- you wouldn't want to be scared of heights, but in amongst the tree canopy, the height is not an issue. Being amongst the leaves and the birds (and away from the ants) is almost comforting in a way. It doesn't take long before you want to reach that extra unreachable inch higher or wider.

One person can prune four rows (4 meters apart) in one pass at a rate of about 30 trees/hour. We start at the far end of the rows and prune as we come back up so the prunings simply fall behind

the machine. The boomlift is very maneuverable as it can spin through 360 degrees, reach up to 10.5 meters, telescope out 6 m and the basket can be swiveled to ensure that positioning is just right for a perfect cut every time, even if it is the other side of the tree.

Although quite small the machine weighs 5 tonnes so the weight of one or two people in the basket is not an issue for stability, whatever the position. The beeper soon lets you know if the machine doesn't like the angle.

To do the actual pruning we have found that using a rechargeable reciprocating saw is the most efficient, and it makes the cleanest cut of branches ranging in size from 5 mm to 100 mm. No need for long handled loppers getting in the way.

The initial cost of the machine has been offset by it being available for hire. It has been popular

with the local builders, electricians, painters and gardeners. The cost of freighting the machine to other areas has restricted its use by other plantation owners at this stage. We anticipate that the increased value of our 12 m logs will be well worth the outlay, and as we age with the trees we will be able to keep on pruning with enjoyment.

As with all pruning, the hard part is not to take off too much leaf area - resulting in slowing the growth of the tree. Once you are up there pruning it is tempting to just keep going up. With the boomlift it is no problem to come back in a year or two.

The machine can be viewed at [www.briminlodge.com.au/boomlifhire](http://www.briminlodge.com.au/boomlifhire)

**Simon and Richard Noble**

Brimin Lodge, Rutherglen





## ***FIELD DAY***

### ***Milling Plantation Thinnings Portable Sawmills In Action***

**DATE:** Saturday July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2006

**TIME:** 10.00am – 3.00pm at

**VENUE:** ***Jim & Susie Martin's Plantation  
"Illangi" - Martins Rd, Benalla  
off Samaria Rd -16 km from Hwy overpass  
Vicroads Map 47, J.5***

**COST:** \$10.00 pp, Lunch Provided

This day will give a practical demonstration of some harvest options for our logs.

30-40 cm sawlogs will be milled with the Lucas Sawmill -

- Ian Schultz from Lucas sawmills of Whorouly, and formerly with the Creswick Timber Harvesting Centre will demonstrate different sawing strategies of backsawing or quarter sawing logs and discuss growth stresses and some cost and return options.

15-20 cm logs will be sawn using the newly imported Kara Small Log Sawmill -

- David Matuschka will demonstrate after lunch, the milling of very small logs and discuss tree assessment before harvest and product options for small sawn log timber.

Trees from Martin's blue gum plantation will be felled for milling by Andrew Mitchener, from Eco Tree Care, Wodonga. Mitch will discuss tree felling and safety issues.

***Please RSVP Peter Houghton by  
Thursday 6th July for catering  
Ph 0357 664212***

## **ASIAN VISITORS INSPECT FFORNE PLANTATIONS**

Russell Washusen of CSIRO recently led a forestry team from China and Vietnam to Victoria and visited Frank and Yvonne Noble's FFORNE plantation. It is astounding to realise the shortage of sawlogs in China equates to harvesting "sawlogs" at ten years approximately the size trees of our plantations at present. It was also amazing the accuracy of team members eyeball assessment of the DOS of the Noble's trees. (E nitens - 28-32cm and E globulus >36cm diameter) and these were highly considered results for age. One purpose of the educational tour was to look at the potential and economics of later harvest in their forests

The team were very impressed both with growth rates and FFORNE's management techniques and there was lively discussion of harvest age and final crop numbers - especially E. nitens.

The Noble's were encouraged by possible earlier harvest date that would enable the financing of a reciprocal visit...there has to be another way - Tattslotto????



*Pictured are Bui Chi Kien Head of Forest Industry Technology (Vietnam), Peng Yan, Technology Manager China Research Centre, LiBohai, Hunan Forestry Department with Russell and Janine Washusen (and Blue)..*

**Yvonne Noble, Tatong**

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## **SMARTIMBERS MARKETING COOPERATIVE LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE**

Sustainably Managed Australian Regional Timbers – SMARTimbers – has launched their new website. This central Victorian landholder co-operative is processing and marketing a unique and durable farm plantation grown hardwood timber – sugar gum.

*Visit their website and see what they are up to: <http://www.smarttimbers.com.au>*

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