

EXPERT GROUP ON TIMBER AND TRADE STATISTICS

**Minutes of the meeting held in Silvan House, 231 Corstorphine Road,
Edinburgh, on Thursday 13 August 2015**

Present: Alan Christison, Roger Coppock, Alan Corson, Neil Cowan, Jeremy Darot (Secretary), Michael Fairgrieve, Andrew Heald, David Leslie, Andy Leitch, John Paterson, David Sulman, Sheila Ward, George Webb, Peter Weston (Chair)

Apologies: Hugh Jones, Nigel Manley, Richard Palmer, David Symons

1. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES (16 April 2015)

The minutes were agreed.

2. MATTERS ARISING

A. Actions completed since the last meeting

Action: The group has encouraged more responses from non-respondents.

Action: The statistics team's actions on 2014 timber statistics and the pellet survey are covered in agenda item 3.

Action: The statistics team published the reports on the statistical reviews of the pellet survey and of woodland area, planting and restocking statistics.

Action: Jeremy Darot circulated Nick Moore's timber utilisation presentation.

Action: Andrew Heald, George Webb and David Sulman's action on the update to the John Clegg report is covered in AOB.

B. Actions outstanding

Action: Statistics team to further investigate the use of Wood Recyclers Association data to estimate exports figures.

Action: FC Scotland to keep the group informed on the dialogue between the FC and DECC regarding definition issues (such as roundwood from thinning being included in residues).

Action: Ben Ditchburn to circulate and then present the draft updated forecast report for QA at the November EGTTS meeting.

3. STATISTICS (Jeremy Darot)

Jeremy Darot presented a paper on near-final estimates of 2014 timber statistics, and sought feedback from the group.

The group considered that stated removals (for softwood and hardwood) are likely to be underestimates because they are sometimes based on quantity hauled not harvested, more work is needed to improve woodfuel statistics in particular.

Action: Sheila Ward to contact DECC regarding availability of RHI data.

Action: Alan Christison and Sheila Ward to follow-up with Duncan McKinnon.

Action: Sheila Ward to contact Ian Tubby regarding the impact on woodfuel from work to bring woodlands in England into management.

Action: Statistics team to add footnotes to Forestry Statistics tables 2.5 and 2.6 explaining that deliveries to woodfuel are likely to be underestimates.

Action: Statistics team to ensure difference in basis of softwood and hardwood availability forecasts is explained in footnote to Forestry Statistics table 2.4b or accompanying text.

Action: Statistics team to carry out further checks on sawmill data

Action: Statistics team to amend heading and footnote in Forestry Statistics table 2.28 on volume certified.

Action: Group to provide any further comments ASAP and by end August.

The statistics team has performed a disclosure analysis of the detailed data collected in the pellet survey. As expected, it was found that due to the small number of UK pellet manufacturers, and the dominance of a few large businesses, most of the detailed statistics cannot be released. However, 5-year average statistics on the source of fibres used in the production of pellets and briquettes will be published in Forestry Statistics 2015.

4. UNECE TIMBER SUBMISSIONS (Sheila Ward / Jeremy Darot)

Sheila Ward outlined the requirements for the annual UK Market Statement and the group discussed the main factors affecting the sector.

Action: Statistics team to pass the group's input on to Nick Moore.

Action: Group to provide any further input to Nick Moore by end August.

The group discussed estimates for 2015 and projections for 2016 for inclusion in the Timber Forecast Questionnaire for UNECE.

Action: Statistics team to incorporate feedback from group on estimates and projections into return.

5. TIMBER UTILISATION STATISTICS (Sheila Ward)

Nick Moore aims to produce a final report on sawn softwood utilisation in the next few months.

6. AOB

- a. David Sulman informed the group of the progress of the John Clegg report update. The funding is coming into place, a proposal has been received and the report is expected to be published in early 2016.
- b. John Paterson updated the group on the progress of the work on private sector timber price indices. Alastair Sandels leads the work and will be re-engaging with the industry and others about funding. The group discussed the potential impact on the Forestry Commission softwood sawlog index from logs at tender not being sold.
- c. Roger Coppock explained that the Forestry Commission is in the process of restructuring, as required by further devolution of forestry. It is also waiting for the details of the budget reduction required by the 2015 Spending Review. A clearer picture is likely to emerge by the next EGTS meeting.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING (AND REMAINING FOR 2015)

Thursday 19 November 2015