

# FC Scotland Timber Development Programme: Improving Timber Quality

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Improving Conifer Timber Quality Steering Group

27<sup>th</sup> November 2008

## Four key Objectives:

- A. Promote a predictable and stable timber supply.
- B. Encourage more use of timber and timber products.
- C. Encourage improvements to timber supply chain efficiency.
- D. Encourage improvements to the quality of the growing stock.

## Activity areas:

1. Identify, prioritise and take action on the key issues to improve the quality and quantity of timber produced from Scotland's forests.
2. Implement the recommendations of the Growing Quality Broadleaves working group.
3. Engage with the farming community to encourage management of farm woodland holdings with the primary objective of producing quality timber.

## Programme of work agreed with FC Scotland:

### 1. Workshop:

- Identify issues affecting the delivery of improved timber quality from Scotland's conifer forests
- Develop proposals for the structure and content of a silviculture seminar

### 2. Seminar - aimed at foresters and managers involved in the planning and implementation of practical silvicultural decisions.

- Many issues raised related to design and timber engineering:
  - Raise awareness and understanding of timber as a building material amongst architecture & engineering sectors, building control, insurance & mortgage industries AND public
  - Increased recognition of the role of timber engineers
  - Need for greater number of students specialising in timber design and engineering
  - Promote design & engineering to make best use of British timber – “learn to love what we have”
  - Concerns about concrete sector lobbying – emphasis on thermal mass
  - Changes to supply chain to facilitate sourcing British timber

- Some timber processing issues:
  - Ideal logs – straight, few/small knots
  - Problem of bluestain in pine – customer resistance to storing redwood
  - Many problems perceived by sawmill customers are cosmetic – but home-grown material has to compete with more uniform imports
  - Need for x-ray grading settings for larch and Douglas fir
  - Improve understanding of causes of twist during kiln-drying and strategies to deal with this

- Issues relating to tree breeding/choice of planting stock:
  - For Sitka spruce – relative importance of different traits (e.g. density vs. microfibril angle)
  - Under SRDP, grant support only for VP improved SS, not seed orchard material – implications for nurseries (uncertain demand)
  - Diversification of species may also cause difficulties for nurseries
  - Evidence of the financial case for investing in VP SS required
  - Is choice of VP planting stock too wide/confusing? Could VP traits be matched to site?

- Issues relating to silviculture:
  - Plant more trees – increase timber production
  - Plant a greater range of species, emphasis on natural durability – larch, Douglas fir, hardwoods
  - Increase in planting of Scots pine anticipated, at expense of Corsican pine
  - Need for guidance on thinning – especially of improved material. Decision tree to cover:
    - Choice of planting stock
    - Spacing
    - Timing and type of thinning
  - Request for models of wood properties and performance as a function of spacing, age and thinning – decision support for foresters



- Title: Improved timber quality through plant selection and silviculture
- Date: 11th February 2009
- Venue: Birnam Conference Centre, Dunkeld
- Objectives:
  - To highlight key issues relating to the quality characteristics, utilisation and marketing of home-grown conifer timber
  - To give an overview of the effect of choice of planting stock and silviculture on conifer timber quality
  - To disseminate the most recent research findings relating to the choice of species, choice of provenance/progeny and silviculture for improved timber quality.

CHAIR: James Pendlebury, Chief Executive, Forest Research

From 09.30	<b>Coffee and registration</b>
10.00 – 10.15	<b>Introduction</b> <i>Stuart Goodall, Confor</i>
10.15 – 10.40	<b>Timber quality – current and future issues</b> <i>David Leslie, James Jones &amp; Sons Ltd.</i>
10.40 – 11.05	<b>Timber quality – an architect’s point of view</b> <i>John Gilbert, John Gilbert Architects</i>
11.05 – 11.15	<b>Short break (coffee available)</b>
11.15 – 12.00	<b>Impacts of silviculture on timber quality</b> <i>Elsbeth Macdonald, Forest Research</i>
12.00 – 12.30	<b>Site assessment and species choice</b> <i>Bill Rayner, Forest Research</i>
12.30 – 13.30	<b>Lunch</b>
13.30 – 13.55	<b>Choice of planting stock</b> <i>Steve Lee, Forest Research</i>
13.55 – 14.15	<b>Nursery issues</b> <i>Richard Ogilvy, Christie Elite Nurseries</i>
14.15 – 14.45	<b>Establishment practice</b> <i>Alan Harrison, Forest Research</i>
14.45 – 15.15	<b>Stand management</b> <i>(Speaker to be confirmed)</i>
15.15 – 15.30	<b>Tea/coffee</b>
15.30 – 16.00	<b>Timber quality assessment and marketing</b> <i>Barry Gardiner &amp; Shaun Mochan, Forest Research</i>
16.00 – 16.15	<b>Round-up and close</b> <i>James Pendlebury</i>