

# Timber Quality Steering Group Meeting

Edinburgh Napier University,  
 Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2011  
 12.30 to 16.30 hrs

**Present:** Richard Ogilvy (RO) - (Chair) Christie Elite Nurseries Ltd  
 Gordon Callander (GC) - Callander's Sawmill  
 Roger Coppock (RC) - Forestry Commission, Corporate Forestry Services  
 Andy Leitch (AL) - Forestry Commission (Scotland)  
 Barry Gardiner (BG) - Forest Research, Timber Properties Programme  
 Shaun Mochan (SM) - Forest Research, Timber Properties Programme  
 Elspeth Macdonald - Forest Research, Timber Properties Programme  
 Steve Lee (SL) - Forest Research, Tree Breeding Programme  
 Christine Cahalan (CC) - University of Wales, Bangor  
 David Lesley (DL) – James Jones Sawmill  
 Margaret Watson (MW) – Scottish Enterprise.

**Apologies:** Andrew Cameron, Geoff Cooper, Michael Fairgrieve, Tim Liddon, Simon Oldham and Madge Holmes who were unable to attend.

12.30 Gather for lunch	
<b>Richard Ogilvy</b>	<b>Welcome. Apologies. Minutes of last meeting</b> which can be found along with presentations at: <a href="http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/INFD-6KYGHS">http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/INFD-6KYGHS</a>
<b>Steve Lee</b>	<b>Current funding levels within Forest Research</b> General decline in funds – 25% across the board. VEE schemes currently in operation. Letters being distributed at the moment saying which posts are safe or at risk. Redundancies will be made this year and over ext 3-years.  <b>Tree Breeding:</b> 43% drop for Tree Breeding over the 4-year period. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tissue Culture ring fenced</li> <li>• DNA-marker work ring fenced (big EU involvement)</li> <li>• No new SS trials planned</li> <li>• More involvement with FTT (old BIHIP)</li> <li>• No further loss of staff but vacancy of a b'leaf breeder will not be filled.</li> <li>• One project leader for Tree Breeding + one support officer.</li> <li>• I am interested in exploring greater private sector involvement.</li> </ul> <b>Barry's programme:</b> 23% drop over the 4-year period. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barry is leaving.</li> <li>• In the interim Elspeth will take over the leadership of the programme.</li> <li>• We shall deliver what we are contracted to deliver.</li> <li>• Loose one other member of staff (PB4) over next year but recruit another of more junior grade (PB5ops).</li> </ul>
<b>Barry Gardiner</b>	<b>Timber Quality Programme Review</b> See presentation
<b>Steve Lee</b>	<b>Tree Breeding Programme Review</b> Consolidating what we have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trying to get x2 papers out from the Aberdeen PhD student who looked at variation in MOE and MfA in Sitka spruce. Student presented to this group 2-</li> </ul>

	<p>years ago.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Big new project with Aberdeen University to look in more detail at wood quality (see Elspeth Macdonald; below)</li> <li>• Re-analysis of the existing full-sibling progeny test data being considered in-house or externally.</li> <li>• SE/cryo work – hope to review at end of this year what remains to be done. Visit by Cathy Hargreaves under TRANZFOR.</li> <li>• Big new EU contract – ProCoGen – DNA-markers to start early in 2012</li> <li>• Economics of VP v SO – Practice Note and paper for Scottish Forestry due before end of March 2012.</li> <li>• There remains 300 full-sib Sitka spruce families in store</li> <li>• We have approval for 1 clonal test – 50 clones which we are not ready to carry out yet.</li> </ul>
<b>Elspeth Macdonald</b>	<p><b>Major new piece of work in the area of Sitka spruce wood quality and its genetic variation.</b></p> <p>See presentation</p>
<b>Shaun Mochan</b>	<p><b>Tree Metrics</b></p> <p>Novel ways of carrying out crop mensuration.</p> <p>Contact SM for more details of visit: <a href="http://www.treemetrics.com/">http://www.treemetrics.com/</a></p>
<b>Roger Coppock</b>	<p><b>Steering Group – Influence on Research projects</b></p> <p>RC explained the new process involved in commissioning research and the attempt to reduce the management costs of this process. RC requested that there be a formal input of this group into that process as it presented GB-wide stakeholders. Discussion of what form this should take e.g. an annually-produced report of research priorities from the Chair to RC.</p>
<b>Andy Leitch</b>	<p><b>Role of the Steering Group</b></p> <p>General discussion on the role of the group which does not meet too often. AL asked does it need to meet at all? There was agreement by all that the Steering Group has a purpose of bringing researchers, growers, and sawmillers from the public and private sector together. In addition, the request of RC (above) gives the Group a new role. EM and SL agreed to review remit and membership, and make recommendations accordingly – we might need a senior public sector person to represent the growing sector for example.</p>
<b>Chris Piper or AN Other</b>	<p><b>Tree topping</b></p> <p>Chris or a substitute was unable to attend. Defer to next meeting.</p>
<b>Dan Ridley-Ellis</b>	<p><b>Visit to the wood testing facilities</b></p> <p>The group discussed the definitions and meaning of terms such as ‘stiffness’, ‘strength’, MOE and MOR before witnessing a Sitka spruce batten being tested for its mechanical strength. Batten broke at just under 1 tonne; equivalent to C24.</p>
<b>16.30</b>	<b>End of meeting</b>