to track their freight movements along the network.

Extending the Network

New Zealand forestry has expanded dramatically over the last few decades, and that is expected to continue by at least 50,000 hectares a year. Many of the afforested areas are not yet serviced by rail or adequate roading. As such, they present a significant business opportunity for Tranz Link – but any rail line development will represent a major capital project by New Zealand standards.

However, transport infrastructure will be required and where financially feasible, Tranz Rail will be a willing investor. Rail developments may have wider community benefits, and thanks to changes in New Zealand transport legislation, rail extensions can be considered as an alternative to roading developments. In July 1995 the Transit New Zealand Act was amended to set up TransFund NZ which will be required to provide for safe and efficient roading. TransFund NZ can also fund alternatives to roading.

That means regional councils can examine rail or any other form of transport which may provide a more efficient overall solution to infrastructure needs than solely new roads and/or high upgrading or maintenance costs on existing routes.

As world trade in forest products broadens, New Zealand producers are increasingly up against very strong competition in overseas markets. Minimising the cost of delivery is crucial to having their products considered alongside those of other countries, such as Chile and South Africa. A cost-effective internal transport infrastructure is therefore very important to all forestry companies in New Zealand and to those considering being part of its expansion. With Tranz Rail a competitive, innovative transport provider, it can only help boost confidence for those concerned with the future of forestry – a cornerstone to New Zealand's economic growth.

Chris Lovell
Market Development Manager
Tranz Link Forestry

NZFOA training: FIRS target date reviewed

The forest industry has made major progress in the training area but won't reach its target of having 100% of the workforce qualified or in training by January 1996.

The target was set by the Forest Owners' Association in 1993 in response to the newly-introduced Health and Safety in Employment Act.

NZFOA education, training and safety committee chairman Mike Hetherington says the target was a bold and optimistic one in the timeframe set. "There has been excellent progress in training in our industry – there are certainly more people either trained or in training than ever before. But despite our best efforts, I think the 100% target is going to be difficult to attain in the short term.

"It was a serious objective, however, and still achievable – it's just going to take longer than we expected."

Mr Hetherington says the latest figures indicate a 657% increase in the numbers of forestry workers possessing one or more FIRS (Forest Industry Recognition of Skills) modules since 1992. "That's a big increase but comes from a low base figure," he says.

"The increase in the logging area was 211%, but the number in training in 1992 was relatively high."

Recent statistics show that about 70% of people involved in the forest growing and harvesting sector have some level of training.

Mr Hetherington says the industry made solid progress in the logging area but struggled to match that in the silviculture area. "Silviculture proved a difficult area to motivate people to seek training. It includes a lot of seasonal workers and there's a higher turnover of workers.

"The NZFOA intends discussing the area of FIRS progress to determine new strategies to meet the target," he says.

"By going for 100% in the short term I think we pushed harder in the training area than we might have if we'd picked a date further out. Our experience in the last 18 months has also been invaluable in improving our understanding of the factors that operate in the training area and the attitudes among workers in this industry."

While the overall picture indicates the industry is still some way short of the target, a number of individual companies are much closer to reaching the goal of 100%, says Mr Hetherington. – **reprinted from NZ Forestry Bulletin NZFOA.**

New forestry lecturer for Lincoln University

Scott Chang, recently appointed Lecturer in Forestry at Lincoln University, is due to arrive in New Zealand in April. Scott is currently completing his silvicultural PhD under Professor Gordon Weetman, at the University of British Columbia.

Major Study

His research is a part of a major study being undertaken on Vancouver Island on declining productivity of second-growth western-redcedar – hemlock forest including the role of the ericaceous understorey of salal. Scott's part of this programme has been to investigate the factors (plant interference, nutrient deficiencies and microbial competition etc.) affecting productivity and the restoration through silviculture. This has involved field, laboratory and greenhouse experimentation, including studies using labelled-N. One of his co-supervisors is Dr Caroline Preston from the Pacific Forestry Research Centre in Victoria, well known for her studies in forest nutrient cycling.

Biological Side

His strong eco-physiological background in forestry and agronomy will strengthen Lincoln's research in ecology, tree nutrition, competition and agroforestry. At Lincoln University Scott will be teaching into the biological side of forestry. His good forestry and silviculture background of British Columbian forestry should give added depth to his teaching. Scott's training in China was in soil science, agronomy and rangeland ecology. Scott Chang replaces Dr Jo Sasse who was recently married and is now working in Japan.