

has therefore supported the sale of cutting rights to State forests. We support foreign investment in forestry and other industries because that investment is crucial to developing the downstream processing industries that add value to our exports.

While forestry has been a big success story in recent years, with new planting of around 100,000 hectares in 1995, there is still work to be done. United supports:

- amending the Holidays Act to allow both fairness and flexibility;
- improving the administration of the ACC;
- focusing on trade development and New Zealand's international marketing systems;
- promoting greater investment in further processing by eliminating bureaucratic obstacles;
- reforming parts of the Resource Management Act to prevent time-wasting and vexatious objections, and appeals made purely to frustrate competition.

However, United also places a high value on conservation of New Zealand's precious natural environment.

We support the introduction of a system of natural resource accounting to better match environmental and economic decision-making. We are opposed to any reversal of present laws which protect native forests.

We also support increases in funding for the Department of Conservation but we want to see better management of the funding already provided.

United is determined to build a country where economic progress and social responsibility go hand in hand.

Hon Bruce Cliffe
United New Zealand
Spokesperson for Forestry

Closure of Rangiora nursery

FRI has decided to close down the FRI nursery operation at Rangiora. Ray Meyer, Chairman of FRI, observed that in spite of everyone's best endeavours, the financial viability of the operation has not been secured, and it was thought that this was unlikely to change in the immediate future. The nursery has faced difficulties, including a lack of PGSF support for South Island nursery research, declining demand for research trial stock, and a very competitive commercial nursery market. Despite the closure, FRI remains committed to the development of a stronger and more focused South Island presence on the University of Canterbury campus.

Government decides on moth eradication programme

The Minister of Forestry, Hon John Falloon, has announced a programme which will include ground and aerial spraying parts of Auckland eastern suburbs.

"Trials on the feeding habits of the tussock moth have been under way for the last three months and have shown that the moth is a definite danger to New Zealand orchards, city and garden trees. Just as worrying is the probable danger to our native and commercial forests," Mr Falloon said.

"The tussock moth is not a significant problem in its native Northern Asia. However, there are numerous examples, such as possums, which have taught us the hard way the devastation that introduced species can have on our environment."

The spraying programme, Operation Ever Green, cannot start until the caterpillars hatch from their eggs, probably in September or October.

One-off Opportunity

"This is a one-off opportunity to strike while the moth is restricted to a relatively small area. We have the option of spraying one area of Auckland now, or large areas of the whole country every year," said Mr Falloon.

"We could not realistically spray our native forests to protect them against the threat of the moth. While we can spray our horticultural crops and plantation forests, it must be avoided if possible.

"The spray that will be used is a bio-control agent called BTK. BTK occurs naturally and is used widely by organic growers, who have extremely strict controls over the chemicals used on their crops.

Tussock Moth Science Advisory Committee

Dr Gordon Hosking	NZ Forest Research
Dr David Bremner	University of Auckland
Dr David Baird	AgResearch
Mr John Mebor	Lincoln Ventures
Dr Richard Hill	Landcare Research
Dr Ruth Frampton	Ministry of Agriculture
Mr Henry Dowler	Ministry of Health
Ms Jane Sheldon	Department of Conservation
Professor Don McGregor	Ministry of Research, Science and Technology

"BTK has been used extensively in aerial spraying programmes in the cities of Vancouver, Portland and Seattle. The spray has no effect on people, animals, plants or any insects other than the caterpillars of moths and butterflies. A public health study done in Vancouver during the city's 1992 spraying confirmed that there were no public health concerns.

"It is very important that the public have confidence in the decision to spray. Since the moth was first found in Auckland every effort has been made to keep the public fully informed.

"An environmental impact study on the aerial spraying on BTK has been widely circulated and is available from the Ministry of Forestry or on the internet (<http://www.gwr.govt.nz/forestry/evergreen>). The Ministry of Health has also reviewed the formulation of BTK that will be used and found that there is no need for the public to take any special precautions."

Science Panel

A special Science Panel has been established to advise the Ministers of Science and Forestry on the eradication programme. The Committee will monitor a number of factors regarding the eradication programme, including public health, environmental and conservation issues.

An independent advisory group representing community interests is also being formed, headed by Philip Sherry the Auckland Regional Council Deputy Chairman. The group will convey any public concerns, issues and suggestions directly to the Minister of Forestry.

Representatives from a wide range of interests including environmental groups, local schools, Maori, the elderly and community organisations have been invited to join the group which meets in early August.

Cooperation the Key

"From the beginning of the outbreak, the key to dealing with the moth has been cooperation from the local community and I appreciate the support we have received. We have been open and upfront and we will continue to do so throughout Operation Ever Green," Mr Falloon concluded.