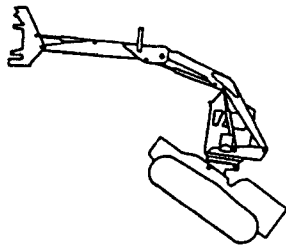


BUSH BULLETIN

Mechanisation and the forest workforce



Levelling, swing-boom feller-buncher

In a previous bulletin we looked at one mechanised operation demonstrated at Forest Industries '94. Industry indications are that there will be a significant move towards more mechanisation over the next few years.

New Zealand Forest Industries magazine has carried the following quotes in the last few issues. LIRO chief John Gaskin looks to the future — "I think that in 25 years time 50% of harvesting will be mechanised".

Greg Bell, production thinning manager for Forestry Corporation states that the company has set a long-term goal of having 80% of its thinning operations mechanised.

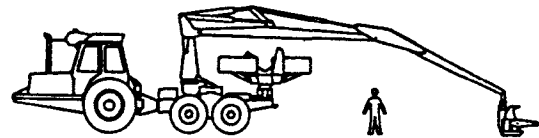
Bill Sewell, logging manager for Carter Holt Harvey's Kinleith area, says the industry is changing rapidly in its adoption of mechanisation, driven by the need to maintain productivity with smaller piece sizes and still get quantities of wood through landings safely. Alan Gleason, clearfell superintendent, says mechanical processing is being looked at for clearfelling second crop radiata pine.

Tasman Forestry's central district manager, Michael Duggan, informs that the company has signed an agreement for mechanised clearfell and is getting proposals for mechanised thinnings.

Illustrations supplied by LIRO

Several of the above believe that the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 will have an effect on the speed of mechanisation. Isolating forest employees from major causes of serious accidents can be achieved by mechanisation in felling, delimiting and breaking out. Since the HSE Act came into force in April 1993, 88% of all logging accidents reported to OSH have taken place in these activities.

Australia has two specialist schools which use simulators to train for mechanised operations by recognising operational co-ordination and aptitude. It will not be possible to establish specialised training facilities in New Zealand until there is enough demand to support them.

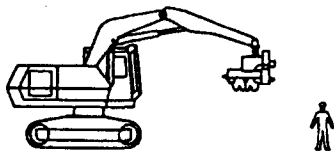


Double grip feller-delimiter

What is being done to prepare for the increase?

A major change in the structure of forestry training has taken place. An umbrella body called the Industry Training Organisation (ITO) has been formed to co-ordinate and identify industry needs and overview the technical content.

Greg Steele, manager of the skills recognition system of the Logging and Forest Industry Training Board (LFITB) explained to *New Zealand Forest Industries* magazine that standard modules were reworked to meet both industry and New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) requirements.



Grapple processor (delimber)

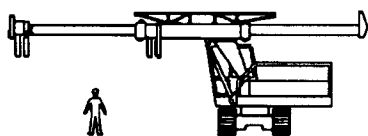
“LFITB has defined work chunks at trade level, which resulted in more than 30 modules being developed to replace the previous Loggers and Forest Skills Certificates late in 1999.” The modules have been written in the form of units of learning to meet NZQA requirements. LFITB will be proactive and further units can be added to meet the industry’s expanding needs.

“The new system provides a nationally recognised trade level qualification and recognises prior learning,” says Greg Steele.

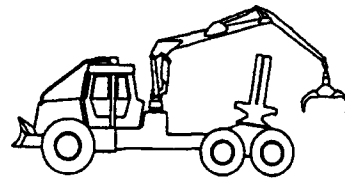
The logging certificate is the National Certificate in Forest Harvesting and thirteen units are required to qualify for the certificate. These range from the basic units to those of a more specialist nature according to a person’s opportunity and job needs.

So far, only two persons have passed Module 3.10 — Machine Operating: Mechanical Processors, which contains the following broad sections:

1. General knowledge: harvesting machines, machine requirements, log making, operating hazards.
2. Safety: personal and machine.
3. Planning: felling layout and log placement.
4. Communication: to and from fellow workers.
5. Operating: machine and fittings.
6. Presentation: log quality.
7. Maintenance: manufacturer’s requirements.
8. Efficiency: production rates.



Stroke-boom delimber



Clambunk skidder

Where will the people come from?

Colin Mckenzie, chairman of the Forest Industry Training and Educational Council, told *New Zealand Forest Industries* that in the short and medium term the forestry sector’s labour needs would come from those already in the sector and there is a great opportunity for retraining, upskilling and utilising currently unused skills held by existing employees. The new certificate course framework will allow those individuals pushing their training beyond the barriers of their current work situation to be identified.

Through the New Zealand Forest Owners Association’s policy statement on safety and health, a major part of the industry is committed to ensure that by January 1996 all of the existing workforce has been trained and qualified to industry minimum standards for the task they are employed in, or be undergoing training to achieve those industry (LFITB) standards.

In summary

1. Mechanisation is on the way for a range of forest operations and is likely to gain momentum in the next few years.
2. A specialised training facility in New Zealand is unlikely until there is a big enough market.
3. A change has been made to the forest training schemes to have skills recognised in module or unit form to build up towards national qualifications. The new National Certificate in Forest Harvesting has an optional module on mechanical processors for operators seeking qualifications on these machines.
4. In the short and medium term it is likely that the logging sector’s labour needs would come from those already employed in the sector.
5. A major part of the industry is committed to a trained workforce by January 1996.