Timber Quality Steering Group. Meeting at Kilmun, Argyll.

Monday 24th September 2012

10:00 to 12:30 The group was shown around the Kilmun Forest Garden by Bill Mason of Forest Research.

Present:

Richard Ogilvy (C-Elite; Chair); Steve Lee (FR); Elspeth Macdonald (FR); Roger Coppock (FC); Tim Liddon (UPM Tilhill); Simon Oldham (Scottish Woodlands); David Leslie (J. Jones); Ian Stewart (J. Jones); Gordon Callander (Callanders); Paul McLean (Edinburgh Napier Forest Products Research Institute).

13:30: Business Meeting commenced chaired by Richard Ogilvy

Apologies:

Andy Leitch (FCS); Graham Gill (FCE); Alan Corson (FCE) Christine Cahalan (Bangor Uni); Andrew Cameron (Aberdeen. Uni); Geoff Cooper (BRE); Michael Fairgrieve (NI FS); Chris Jones (FCW); Margaret Watson (SE) and Richard Parsons (FC PSSB).

1. Update on pests and diseases

Roger Coppock

Roger updated the group on the significant number of pests and diseases affecting British Forestry right now (see presentation). This tied in with the theme earlier in the morning of increasing the choice of species to be planted.

Steve Lee reminded the group that no resistance breeding was currently taking place and that it would be costly to do so – certainly not compatible with a dwindling budget (50%). Traditional resistance breeding can be expensive and long-term (20 years or so). DNA-marker technology may shorten this time scale but the markers do not exist yet and genotyping trees is currently expensive but decreasing by approx 50% every 18 months. So \$1200/tree may fall to nearly \$10/tree in approx. 4-years time (update from Steve Lee: Florida Uni say it has fallen from \$120 to \$70 in 12-months).

FR is building its DNA-marker knowledge under EU contracts such as <u>NovelTree</u> and <u>ProCoGen</u> and collaborating closely with Roslin Institute.

2. Agree revised Terms of Reference

Roger Coppock

A paper was distributed to the Group prior to the meeting. The intention is to ask the Steering Group to give feedback to the Forestry Commission by way of a report from the Chair indicating where the Group feels research priorities may lie. This new role should help give the Group focus and reason and was generally welcomed by the Group.

Discussion took place as how this group overlapped with others such as <u>SIRT</u>. It was decided that SIRT was mainly concerned with wood and not breeding, Scottish in outlook and conifers only, whereas this Steering Group was breeding and wood quality, GB orientated and was now including broadleaves as well as conifers in its remit. Whereas there was an overlap of organisations represented, this was thought to be necessary as the subject mater was sufficiently different.

3. Group Membership

Steve Lee

It was agreed that members should officially represent their trade organisation. Steve agreed to write to the relevant organisations and seek approval for certain members and ask for suggestions as appropriate. If a member can not attend a meeting they should seek to find a substitute from their organisation. Steve to ask all members if anybody wishes to stand down. It was agreed that Edinburgh Napier University Forest Products Research Institute ought to be represented.

4. Wood Quality of alternative species - new PhD Napier/Elspeth

Paul updated the Group on plans for a new PhD (see presentation)

5. SS Breeding programme and co-op possibility Steve Lee

Steve explained to the group the 50% drop in funding for tree breeding over a 3-year period and the fact that the conifer breeding programme in particular was stagnating. Money needs to come in from outside the FC perhaps in the form of a co-operative involving private sector nurseries and forestry companies. Options are currently being investigated.

6. Timber properties update

Elspeth Macdonald

Elspeth gave an overview of recent developments in the Wood and Timber Properties research programme (see presentation). She highlighted the significant staff changes in the programme team over the last year, including the recent departure of John Fonweban on a 2-year secondment to the FAO. Development of timber quality models for conifer species is ongoing, together with work investigating the impacts of alternative silviculture on timber quality and a joint project with tree breeding to look at including wood stiffness as a selection criterion in the Sitka spruce breeding programme, (see presentation).

7. New Chair

Richard Ogilvy stood down as Chair and was thanked by the Group for his work over the last 3-years.

Tim Liddon kindly accepted an invitation to take up the position of Chair.

8. AOCB

The link for the FR Decision Support System website is given here. A password should be gained free of charge from emis.support@forestry.gsi.gov.uk; access is available to all on request. The DSS models includes ESC, Conifer Timber Quality, Forest Gales.

Next meeting? Secretaries Steve & Elspeth to propose date and place with good notice. Bristol?

15:45 Depart