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NEWS & VIEWS • April 2004

UPDATE

SLIMF & ISO

NCT RETAINS ISO CERTIFICATE

- Lauren McEwan-
  Forest Technology Co-Ordinator,
  Forest Technology Services Department

NCT’s annual ISO audit was carried out at Head Office in January this year.

The objective of the audit was to determine whether or not the requirements of the standards set by the NCT Quality Management System are still being fulfilled. This prerequisite allows NCT to maintain the TUV CERT certificate for a further three years.

In the audit, processes within NCT were reviewed. Random samples, through interviews and document reviews, were taken to check conformity with work systems and standards that are set out in the Quality Policy Manual, System Procedure documents and Departmental Procedure.

The result was a very high standard of compliance with ISO requirements and no Corrective Actions were raised. Three “areas for improvement” were identified and these will form an important part of the 2004 ISO improvement programme.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Consistency between audit teams in the completion of internal audit checklists and findings’ reports.
- The generation of Corrective Action Requests (CARs) should be encouraged with more CARs recorded in 2004.
- The control of external documents (eg. Mill specifications and revisions thereof) need to be improved. All copies of contracts need to be complete and, where applicable, the relevant mill specification revision number should be stated.

FOCUS AREAS

“Service Excellence and continual Improvement” will rank high on NCT’s priority list for 2004:

- Queries and complaints (internal and external) will be analysed on a 6-weekly basis.
- Preventive actions will be put in place and corrective actions will be addressed with the aim of ensuring continual improvement in the timber marketing and forestry advisory services offered by NCT.
This will be the last time that I write this column as General Manager of the Co-operative.

I have reached the optional retirement age of 60 and, after consultation with the Board of Directors, it has been decided that I should be redeployed. I shall now be dealing with NCT’s special developments as General Manager: Special Projects.

The most important project that we are currently involved with is the joint venture with Södra Cell. The investigation into the feasibility of building a BCTMP pulp mill at Richards Bay is the most important project at the moment.

Patrick Kime, currently the GM of NCT Tree Farming (Pty) Ltd, will be replacing me as GM of the Co-op. I hope that he gets as much pleasure from this rewarding position as I have.

I have been privileged to be GM of the co-op for 17 years. During this time, we as a powerful team of Members and staff have been able to achieve a great deal.

There has been continuous growth in:
- Number of Members.
- Areas of plantations owned by Members.
- Tonnage of timber sold.
- Expansion of markets.
- Increase in services offered to Members.
- Substantial increases in prices.
- Involvement in research, particularly tree improvement.

All this has been achieved through a wonderful combination of:
- Loyal support from Members,
- Sound guidance from the Board of Directors; and
- Competent and enthusiastic staff.

Forestry remains a wonderfully stable and rewarding option for landowners. This is not withstanding the huge stress through fire season.

There are still many opportunities for further development for NCT that can benefit Members. The success of these will depend on:
- Sustained Member loyalty,
- The resistance to the temptation to enjoy short term benefits outside of NCT to the long term detriment of the Member; and
- Preparedness to guts it out through tough times.

Members have done this in the past, and by staying as a unified co-operative, the rewards have been realised. It is with this type of determination that past Members built NCT to what it is today, a position of great respect and envy in the forestry and agricultural sectors.

The world-wide increasing demand for plantation grown timber, particularly short fibre species such as our Eucalypts (Gum) and Acacia (Wattle) presents wonderful opportunities for NCT and its Members. We can look to the future with great confidence.
NCT and Södra Cell, a Swedish world leader in the production of market pulp will carry out a feasibility study for a new pulp mill at Richards Bay.

A jointly owned project company will research the viability of constructing a eucalyptus-based BCTMP (Bleached, Chemical, Thermal, Mechanical Pulp) mill with a capacity of 300 000 tonnes. This is will be the first time that BCTMP will be produced from eucalyptus wood on this scale.

Apart from establishing the economic and financial viability of the project, the study will also seek to prove its environmental soundness and market acceptability of eucalyptus-based BCTMP.

“A combination of the availability of eucalyptus resources and energy costs along with the fact that we believe BCTMP based on eucalyptus is a quality for the future, offers unique advantages for our customers. This forms the basis for our decision to enter into this project,” says Leif Brodén, president of Södra Cell AB.

Peter Keyworth, General Manager of NCT explains: “This is an exciting opportunity for NCT to investigate the possibilities of adding value to the timber produced by its Members.”

“It is a joint venture with an organisation that subscribes to similar co-operative principles as NCT,” he continues.

Södra chose South Africa for its investor friendly policies, its location to major shipping destinations, the availability of eucalyptus forests and its long-term relationship with NCT — NCT has been supplying Södra with round wood logs for over 15 years.

The completion of the feasibility study is expected by December 2005 and the mill commissioned in 2007. Knut Omholt from Södra and NCT’s Peter Keyworth will oversee the feasibility study.

Södra — like NCT — is a timber co-operative servicing some 35 000 members. Södra Cell owns 2,2 million hectares of forest in the south of Sweden. It also owns and operates 14 sawmills and five pulp mills in Sweden and Norway.
NCT DURBAN WOOD CHIPS

(A visual Report)

An aerial view of wood chipping shed

The second wood chipping reclaimer (foreground) under construction

An aerial view of the office block and screening plant

View of the wood chipping shed with roof sheeting.

View of the wood chipping shed with the erection of girders for the roof
Patrick Kime takes over the reins from Peter Keyworth as NCT’s new General Manager effective from 1 April 2004.

Patrick is currently General Manager of NCT Tree Farming (Pty) Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of NCT. He joined NCT in 1995 and holds a BSc Forestry degree from the University of Stellenbosch. Patrick brings to the position over 20 years experience in the forestry industry and has managed the tree farming division since its inception in 1996.

“During my few years at NCT Tree Farming, I have developed a strong admiration for NCT members and what they, through their elected Board, have achieved,” says Patrick.

“By taking a long-term, co-operative view, which has often meant forsaking short-term, higher outside price offers, NCT has achieved huge increases in the average prices achieved for the members’ timber.

“This loyalty and foresight is again making it possible to embark on exciting new ventures for increased profits in the future. Against this background, I feel privileged to be joining a very professional management and staff team in pursuit of an ever-improving service to NCT and its members,” concludes Patrick.

Peter Keyworth, who retires from the post of General Manager of the Co-operative will remain in the service of NCT as General Manager - Special Projects.

“In recent years, NCT has taken significant strides to secure markets for its Members in the form of its own wood chipping facility under construction in the Port of Durban and the proposed construction of a new BCTMP pulp mill in South Africa with the Swedish co-operative, Södra Cell,” says Dr Carl Seele, Chairman of the NCT Board. “It was therefore important to appointment a manager to oversee the developments of the Co-operative’s investments. This is what Peter will undertake to do,” he continues.

Peter Keyworth joined NCT in September 1985 as Projects Manager and was appointed General Manager in November 1988. Over the years, he has played a significant role in securing markets for Members’ timber. These include markets in the Scandinavian countries, Turkey, Japan and Spain to name a few.
Spoornet has refocused its attention on the many safety issues that have plagued its past.

As a result, particular attention is now being paid to the state/condition of loading areas, loading patterns and profiles.

To ensure safe working in terms of the OHS Act: (Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993 with amendments in April 2001), Spoornet have the right:

1. To refuse to marshal wagons under any circumstances that they deem to be unsafe:
   - Prior notice is not a requirement for not marshalling wagons under these conditions.
   - Prior notice is not a requirement for “closing” a loading area.
   - Once “closed” or deemed unsafe a loading area can remain so indefinitely.
   - Only a duly qualified Spoornet official can authorise the resumption of marshalling activities.

2. To be responsible for all of the activities that takes place on their property. Spoornet can cease to marshal wagons without prior notice for these and other reasons:
   - The unsafe stacking/stockpiling of timber.
   - Any and all fire hazards – it is illegal to light a fire on Spoornet property.
   - Unsafe practices when loading or offloading wagons.
   - Unsafe acts while a train is marshalling wagons or is in motion – all activities must cease immediately and all persons must stand well clear until the train has completed all movements.

3. To prohibit a loaded wagon from being marshalled or reaching its destination if it is deemed to have an unsafe loading pattern or profile:
   - A wagon will not be cleared from its point of origin – the loader will have to rectify the problem at the loading point.
   - A wagon can be stopped at any location en route – the loader will have to rectify the problem at the location en route.
   - If the wagon is damaged during the loading process – the loader will have to offload the wagon and will be liable for any costs that result.

NCT fully supports Spoortnet’s safety programme and will at all times endeavour to adhere to its rules and regulations. NCT Members who do not conform to these rules and regulations will be deemed to have acted of their own accord and will be responsible for rectifying the non-conformity at their own cost.
SAFETY AT LOADING SITES

- Under no circumstances may sawn logs or any part thereof be left in, on or in-between rail tracks.
- Under no circumstances may pine bark or any other debris be swept from a wagon so that it lies in, on or in-between rail tracks.
- Rail tracks and supporting infrastructure must at all times be clearly visible and free of foreign objects.
- Care must be taken not to leave equipment too close to rail infrastructure as it may be damaged.
- SpoorNet will not be responsible or liable for equipment that is left on its property.
- Under no circumstances may any person tamper with wagons i.e. releasing of handbrakes, releasing of air pressure from brake cylinders, etc.
- Under no circumstances may any person, other than a SpoorNet Official, move a wagon. Any person who moves a wagon will be held liable for any costs that accrue as a result of that wagon being moved.
- When loading with grabs or any mechanical equipment, extreme caution must be taken not to damage the wagon and overhead power cables.
- When the train arrives to shunt, all activity on and around the wagon must stop immediately and all staff must stand clear of the wagon until such time as all shunt movements are completed.
• Do not exceed the stencilled carrying capacity of the wagon. The maximum net carrying capacity of the wagon is stencilled on the side of each wagon. Please remember some lines have weight restrictions.
• Do not load the wagon to a height higher than the “Head” or “Tail” and do not exceed the height of the stanchions of the wagon. The entire diameter of the log must be within the wagon; no part thereof may be higher than any part of the wagon.
• The load must be levelled across the entire width and length of the wagon.

INCORRECT – LOAD MUST BE LEVELLED.

INCORRECT – LOGS PROTRUDING

INCORRECT – LOADED ABOVE STANCHIONS

CORRECT LOADING PROFILE

• All logs must cross a minimum of two (2) stanchions towards the ends of each log.
• No log, or any other object, may protrude from the side of a wagon at any height or for any length.
• If a wagon has any physical defects that could affect load stability i.e. missing stanchions, bent stanchions, etc., the wagon must not be loaded. The wagon number must be recorded and reported to NCT who will make arrangements with Spoornet to have an alternative wagon placed for loading.
Since its launch in December last year, Project Thuth’ithlati has recorded remarkable improvements in performance for the Midlands to Richards Bay rail operations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BEFORE THUTH’ITHLATI</th>
<th>AFTER THUTH’ITHLATI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distance of locomotives covered on average per month</td>
<td>6 600kms</td>
<td>11 000kms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement of timber (KZN Midlands) per week</td>
<td>15 000 tonnes</td>
<td>18 000 tonnes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement of timber per annum</td>
<td>781 196 tonnes</td>
<td>960 284 tonnes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of ST wagons used per week</td>
<td>766 wagons</td>
<td>551 wagons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnaround time for ST trucks</td>
<td>12 days</td>
<td>7 days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Phase I & II of Project Thuthi 2 will optimise the movement of timber from Mpumalanga, Vryheid, Swaziland and the Eastern Cape to the KZN coast.

Project Thuthi’hlathi was established between all timber industry role players, Spoornet and independent business consultants to achieve an efficient, sustainable and affordable rail transport model for all concerned.
Pulp and paper manufacturers are becoming increasingly selective with the species that they process. Different species have very different pulping characteristics that can influence the productivity of a pulp mill. Ideally a mill would prefer to buy batches of a single species and to then mix the various batches in the ratios that suit a particular product.

For NCT to be able to offer customers shipments of pure species, we have to encourage our Members to select trees to plant from a limited list (Table 2).

**IMPORTANCE OF WOOD DENSITY**

Over 80% of the timber that NCT markets is used for pulp production. To cater for customers’ requirements, it must ensure that its Members are planting species with desirable pulping characteristics.

Two of the most important characteristics to consider are density and pulp yield.

Wood in the basic density range of 400 – 600 kg/m³ is preferred for pulp and paper manufacture.

Timber from short rotation eucalypt plantations grown in South Africa falls into this range. However, within this preferred range, higher density wood has some advantages, such as improved pulp mill digester productivity.

For pulp producers who import wood chips/wood, higher density timber is more important. Much higher stowage levels can be achieved on ships by using higher density wood. For this reason, NCT encourages Members to grow species that have a higher density than E. grandis. Table 1 summarises important pulping characteristics for various species and highlights the fact that E. grandis is a relatively low-density eucalypt.

The proposed BCTMP mill for Richards Bay is an exception to this strategy – the process involves mechanically breaking up the wood. The current thinking is that this mill will initially take in E. grandis. However, the Japanese mills will still remain the most important NCT market for hardwood species.

**Table 1** Density and pulp yield ranges recorded from samples that have been sent to Japanese laboratories for pulp testing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPECIES</th>
<th>DENSITY (KG/M³)</th>
<th>TOTAL PULP YIELD %</th>
<th>AGE YEARS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E. grandis</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. macarthuri</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. nitens</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>53.1</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. smithii</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Wattle</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GU 082 (grandis x urophylla)</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GN 018 (grandis x nitens)</td>
<td>512</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SU 092</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IMPORTANCE OF TOTAL PULP YIELD

Pulp yield is the mass percentage of cell wall material remaining after pulping. Pulp is made up of wood fibres that have been separated from each other by chemically dissolving lignin or by mechanically tearing the fibres apart.

For chemical pulping numerous benefits are associated with processing species that yield greater percentages of pulp for a given amount of timber:

- A reduction in wood requirements
- A reduction in chemical use
- Improved digester efficiency in chemical pulping
- Increased production capacity.

The significance of density and pulp yield to a pulp mill can be illustrated by comparing E. grandis to E. smithii. Samples collected from a species trial in the KZN Midlands were processed and E. smithii yielded an additional 14.7 kg in fibre per tree when compared to E. grandis.

SITE SPECIES MATCHING

Timber growing regions in South Africa cover a wide range of growing conditions with regards to latitude, altitude climate, geology, soils, topography and biotic factors. To cover this site diversity, it is necessary to recommend a variety of species that can grow well under prevailing conditions.

Wood quality can be strongly influenced by genotype-site interactions. This is an important factor as we become more orientated towards producing quality rather than simply quantity. It is very important to match species to site conditions that suit that particular species. For example, E. grandis grown under optimal conditions (high rainfall, deep soils, optimum temperature) will give higher pulp yields than trees grown on marginal sites.

Table 2 summarises the species with acceptable pulping characteristics that are suitable for growing on the range of sites found in the summer rainfall region of South Africa. Members should limit their species choice to those listed in this table. This will enable NCT, in the future, to market species pure batches to customers.
### Table 2  Species choices for NCT Pulp Markets and their Site Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPECIES</th>
<th>SOILS</th>
<th>MEAN ANNUAL TEMP (MAT) °C</th>
<th>MEAN ANNUAL RAINFALL (MM)</th>
<th>ALTITUDE RANGE (M)</th>
<th>FROST TOLERANCE</th>
<th>OTHER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PREFERRED SPECIES / HYBRIDS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. mearnsii (black wattle)</td>
<td>Can be grown on very shallow soils. Will tolerate moderate levels of wetness and all textures of soils.</td>
<td>16,0 - 19,5</td>
<td>760 - 850</td>
<td>200 - 1200</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Susceptible to snow damage. Roots damaged by termites and whitegrub. Susceptible to a variety of diseases on humid sites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. smithii</td>
<td>Requires deep soils which must be well drained. Not well suited to shale and mudstone derived soils.</td>
<td>14,5 - 17,5</td>
<td>850 - 950</td>
<td>1100-1400</td>
<td>Moderate Avoid frost pockets.</td>
<td>Success depends on good site matching and the use of sound uncontaminated nursery stock. Susceptible to snout beetle, Phytophthora and Pythium in humid climates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G x U Hybrid</td>
<td>Prefers deep well drained soils but can be grown on soils of moderate depth.</td>
<td>17,0 – 22,5</td>
<td>900 – 1000</td>
<td>0 – 700</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>A sub-tropical hybrid that performs well on warmer sites. Can be used for pole and saw-timber production.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **OTHER ACCEPTABLE SPECIES** | | | | | | |
| E. grandis | Can be grown on sites with moderate soil depth that are well drained. | 16,5 - 21,5 | 899 - 1000 | 0 - 1200 | Poor | Susceptible to disease when planted off-site. Susceptible to snow damage. Suitable for pole and saw-timber markets. |
| E. dunnii | Can be grown on shallow soils. It prefers soils that are moderately to well drained. | 15,5 - 18,5 | 822 - 925 | 700 - 1300 | Moderate | Susceptible to snow damage. Resistant to termites but suffers from moderate snout beetle attacks. No major diseases. |
| E. nitens | Prefers deep clay loam to sandy loam soils that are well drained. | 13,5 - 15,5 | 820 - 900 | Above 1400 | Good | Withstands moderate to heavy snowfalls. Very sensitive to termite damage. Susceptible to a variety of diseases when planted off site. Can be used for saw-timber. |
| G x N Hybrid | Requires deep well drained soils. | 15,5 - 17,5 | 860 - 936 | 1000 - 1400 | Moderate | Withstands light - moderate snowfalls. |

| **OTHER LESS DESIRABLE SPECIES THAT CAN BE GROWN (DUE TO SITE LIMITATIONS)** | | | | | | |
| E. macarthurii | Can be grown on shallow soils and is tolerant of up to 50 % stones in the soil profile. | 14,0 - 18,0 | 730 - 860 | Above 1100 | Very good | Although very frost hardy, it is prone to stem breakage after heavy snowfalls. Fairly resistant to termites and not very susceptible to disease. |
| G x C Hybrids | A very handy hybrid that will tolerate shallow soils. | 18,5 - 22,0 | 800 - 900 | 0 - 1000 | Poor | Can tolerate marginal growing conditions with low disease risk. Timber suitable for saw-timber markets. |

For more advice on species choices for your particular farm conditions, contact the NCT Technical Department.
LACES is the acronym for Lookout, Awareness, Communication, Escape & Safety, developed to reduce the number of “rules” that have to be remembered when fighting a fire. It also provides a safety net to fire fighters when the unexpected happens.

**Lookouts**

The lookout is the eyes of the crew and its leader. Lookouts should be in a position from which they can see the fire line, the fire itself and the crew working the line. They should be able to recognise and anticipate dangerous situations and report changes immediately.

**Awareness**

Lookouts should watch for changes in the fire's location and behaviour. They should also track the weather and watch for tell tale signs of change.

**Communication**

The fire team should have a quick, reliable and tested way to communicate with others. This may be by direct radio contact or through a lookout or other relay points. Establish regular reporting times.

**Escape routes**

Two planned routes of escape should be in place with everyone recognising what triggers a move to the safety zone. The length of escape routes should be measured in minutes and seconds and not meters.

**Safety zones**

These are places of refuge. Their size is dictated by the fuel, terrain, weather conditions and worst-case fire behaviour.

Source: The Fire Manager’s Handbook on Veld & Forest Fires by William C. Tée
Oribi numbers down
-Athol Marchant-
Co-ordinator for the Oribi Working Group

Oribi populations are on the decline. These are results from a recent census count carried out late last year by the Oribi Working Group.

A total of 341 KZN landowners were approached to participate in the census of which only 164 farmers responded. Many farmers felt that this information could be used to prevent land-use change and therefore did not submit their counts.

Initial results indicate 1 500 Oribi on the 164 farms. Eighty-one farms have Oribi populations of less than 10 animals - of which 60% have five or less - and on one, the Oribi have become extinct.

This is a concern as previous research has shown that Oribi populations of 10 or less are at greatest risk of extinction. There have been serious declines in numbers in the last two to three years in populations that were considered good (and safe) in the 2000/2001 survey.

Only two populations were reported to have increased significantly over this period. One group of Oribi went from 16 to 42 and another from 15 to 31.

On 11 neighbouring farms in the southern KZN midlands, the overall combined population stand at 180 animals. This is possibly one of the biggest concentrations of Oribi on private land in the province. These landowners are to be commended on the sacrifice they are making in not converting their remaining grasslands into croplands.

Well over 50% of the returns revealed that poaching with dogs was a major problem for their Oribi. An appeal is made to all landowners to control the movement of dogs on their property.

Oribi concerns are not limited to KZN - it is a national problem and the OWG has set up good working relationships between KZN, Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga.

ABOVE: Peter Keyworth (centre), General Manager of NCT Forestry presented a donation in the sum of R15 000 to John Kennedy (right), Chairman of the Oribi Working Group (OWG). Rob Markham (left), a member of the OWG and Business Manager at Msinsi Holdings was also present. NCT has aligned itself with the OWG (affiliated to the Endangered Wildlife Trust - EWT) to promote the conservation of the endangered Oribi antelope in KwaZulu Natal.
Timber farmers, who prefer not to manage their own plantations, are able to purchase the management services and expertise of professionals who can turn timber farming into a profitable million rand business.

This is what NCT Tree Farming (Pty) Limited can do for you.

The following is an analysis of typical farm managed by NCT Tree Farming. The name of the farm has been omitted for confidentiality purposes. However, here is a brief description of the farm for a meaningful interpretation of the results.

The farm is 285ha, of which 204ha are planted to E. grandis (138.2ha ages 4-12 years), wattle (32.4ha ages 1-3 years) and E. smithii (33ha age 2 years). Sales during the five years under review have been only E. grandis, with MAI's averaging about 18 tonnes per hectare per year. Gum is in rotation and the correct site species matching is being practised which will improve timber yields.

The annual mean temperature range is 16.8°C to 18.7°C and the mean average precipitation is 982ml. Fifty percent of the farm area is level, while 35% is moderately steep and the remaining 15% is very steep requiring manual extraction.

The farm is situated 125kms by road from the nearest large mill and approximately 30kms from the closest rail depot. The farm therefore is not particularly well situated from a logistics perspective.

**Financial Results:**

During this five-year period (1999-2003), 20 864 tonnes have been sold - 80% to pulp. The annual tonnages sold
can be read at the bottom of the graph along with the average Net Standing Values per tonne for each respective year.

Net standing values are checked monthly and sales adapted accordingly to take advantage of market availability and temporary bonuses thereby maximising return.

Total revenue generated for the period amount to R4,1 million. This includes commitment and annual bonuses as well as the FSC (Forestry Stewardship Council) bonus of R5 per tonne. The revenue per year is graphed in red.

The farm's financial year-end is February with the 2003 year representing ten months of the 2002 calendar year, a period which enjoyed the NCT bonuses and mill prices reflecting a relatively weak rand (R7-90:US$1 as at 28 February 2003).

The profit per year is graphed in green. Note the exceptional profit achieved in 1999 due to a highly profitable standing sale agreement during the “hunt for gum” programme. Excluding 1999 results, an average annual profit of R250 000 has been achieved. This represents an average 30% of revenues per year. An amount of R41 000 has been spent on road maintenance during the five-year period and no fires have occurred on the farm.

The line graph represents the cumulative cash amount with no adjustment for the time value of money, reaching R1 222 646 in 2003. Not bad for a 204ha farm, wouldn't you say?

To discuss the management of your farm by NCT Tree Farming, contact Patrick Kime or Tracey Wilson on (033) 897 8500.
There has been an increased demand on ICFR research and technical staff for field day presentations over recent years. The ICFR recognises that field days are key success factors in satisfying its members’ needs and believes that these need to be centrally co-ordinated to ensure optimal transfer of technology.

The Zululand Regional Interest Group has operated effectively by these principles. In 2003, regional interest groups, operating in the same way, were successfully set up in the Central Region (Piet Retief area) and in the KZN Midlands. An Mpumalanga Interest Group serving the Sabie area also exists. The ICFR will support and service these four regional interest groups under the following principles:

• Each interest group will be co-ordinated by the ICFR but will be chaired and driven by the ICFR members of that region;
• Each interest group will look after the broad technical needs of its constituency and be multi-disciplinary and multi-species in focus;
• There will be two ICFR-supported field days per region per year;
• The field days must be issue-driven with topics relevant to that region; and
• Speakers who can best address those topics/issues will be approached.

Regional Interest Groups & Field Days for 2004

Zululand Regional Interest Group
Chairperson: Tim Netterville (Sappi Forests)
Field Days: Thursday, 20 May & Thursday, 20 May

Midlands Regional Interest Group
Chairperson: Stuart Charlton (Singisi Forest Products)
Field Days: Tuesday, 9 November

Mpumalanga Regional Interest Group
Chairperson: Tammy Swain (ICFR) - interim
Field Days: Wednesday, 13 October

Central Regional Interest Group
Chairperson: Siggie von Fintel (TWK Agriculture)
Field Days: Tuesday, 16 November

Contact: Sally Upfold (sally@icfr.unp.ac.za or telephone 033-386 2314)

Visit the ICFR website for the latest in forestry technology www.icfrnet.unp.ac.za
Harald Niebuhr might have pursued a career in the corporate environment as a merchant banker but he opted for timber farming instead. Having had a taste of both worlds, it was obvious that farming would take precedence though “a professional golfer would have also been great,” he quips.

Harald loves a challenge be it in business or on the golf course. He believes that the dynamics of the forestry industry will challenge the way NCT has operated to now.

“What we will need is a) a long term vision, as our product is a long term crop; b) a long term memory, to remember how NCT has served its members in the past; and c) sheer guts and innovation, not only to do things better, but also to do better things than our competitors,” says Harald.

Having said that, he also knows that the Co-operative has been a success story because of its leadership, member support and dedicated staff complement.

“We have been fortunate to have great leaders who, over many years, have been passionate about NCT, with the interest of the private timber grower at heart,” he says.

“As important, has been the support of members who have shown long term commitment to the vision of NCT, even if it meant sacrificing their own interests in the short term. Dedicated personnel who have understood the needs of members and customers has also played an important role to NCT’s success,” he concludes.

Asked what it is about forestry that he most enjoys, he replies, “Experiencing the wonders of God’s creation firsthand,” and continues with what he least enjoys: “Weeds, fires and “no railtrucks!”

Harald regards his parents as being the biggest influence in his life and Dr Johan van Zyl, current CEO of Sanlam, the biggest influence in his career. He also pays tribute to his wife of 10 years, for her support in all his endeavours.

His final comment to us is, “Wouldn’t it be great to one day leave the world a better place.”

Now there’s a challenge for you, Harald.

Harald’s Favourite:
- Past time/hobby: golf (obviously), hunting, the outdoors
- Music: classical
- Author: no favourite but enjoys books by Peter Drucker, Jack Welch and other business gurus
- Meal: “skaapnek”, “mieliebrood”, “pampoenkoekies” and curried beans

Pet Hate:
- Pessimists

FAMILY MATTERS:
Harald is a social, family man who has been married to Annel for 10 years. They have two children, Michelle (5) and Sheldon (3).
CTC recently commissioned what is referred to as the M6 Conveyor that enables CTC to now load two vessels simultaneously – a world first.

This means that CTC will be loading in excess of 65 vessels during 2004. It gives comfort to CTC’s customers that demurrage on their vessels will be reduced to a minimum.

With the completion of the M6 Conveyor, CTC now has two independent routes to the quayside with complete flexibility to draw wood chips from any of its three massive chip piles.

The conveyor runs through an ecologically sensitive area and full credit to management for getting the EIA approved and construction completed within budget.

One final phase in CTC’s medium term strategic plan remains: the construction of a second wood chip ship loader.

CTC was recently awarded the contract to construct such a second new loader on the new wood chip jetty. The loader will be a mirror image of the loader CTC completed in 2001. Construction will commence shortly and completion is expected early in 2005.

The two chipping lines at CTC will be running at the design capacity of 2,4 million tonnes in 2004. As with any enterprise running at full steam, rateability throughout the supply chain from supply of logs to the off-take of wood chips is critical and all Members are called on to co-operate in this regard.

NCT exported some 4,5 million eucalyptus round logs to Europe in 2003. This is a total of 162 600 solid cubic metres of logs that were loaded on to five vessels (two bound for Turkey and three bound for Norway).

Each vessel was loaded with approximately 40 000 solid cubic metres of logs took between six to eight days to load, adhering to strict regulations prescribed by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), SA Marine Safety Association (SAMSA) and Department of Transport (DOT).

Approximately 70% of the cargo is normally loaded below deck with about 30% loaded above deck. Each vessel took some 24 days to reach its respective destination, weather permitting.

What makes this exercise such an achievement? NCT co-ordinates all the activities from sourcing the timber to delivery to the foreign buyers’ wood yard. This involves interacting with some 15 intermediate service providers, shipping agents and clearing & forwarding agents.
**Who’s New?**

- **Ed Hayter**  
  NCT Tree Farming, Greytown

- **Terence Newton**  
  NCT Tree Farming, Vryheid

- **Elmarie Pretorius**  
  Member Services Administrator, Nelspruit Office

- **Bongiwe Visagie**  
  Member Services Administrator, Richards Bay Office

- **Nokuphiwa Mlambo**  
  Member Services Administrator, Richards Bay Office

**Achievements**

**NCT Supports Adult Literacy**

**ABOVE:** Twelve staff from NCT Tree Farming are proud recipients of a basic adult literacy certificate. The learners attended classes for six weeks at the Midmar Training Centre under the guidance of Rotary’s Prof. Vic Bredenkamp. The training consisted of daily classes over a period of six weeks and covered the basic aspects of literacy (learning the alphabet, writing and reading).

Today they are empowered to read and write and are grateful to NCT for allowing them the opportunity to learn.

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