

Monday 8 May 2006  
Attention Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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## Experimental trees grown for high-value products: now for the results.

A 22-year-old plantation experiment established by Forestry Tasmania in north-east Tasmania is being harvested this week and scientists are working on site to discover whether their silvicultural efforts will pay off in the sawmill.

This is the longest-running experiment of its kind in Australia, designed with the end product (solid wood and veneer products) in mind.

The experiment was designed to research the effects of well-managed silvicultural techniques, including pruning and alternative stand thinning treatments.

CRC for Forestry researchers from partner organisations Forestry Tasmania, Ensis (formerly CSIRO), the University of Tasmania and the University of Melbourne are involved, making this a truly co-operative research effort.

CRC for Forestry researchers have already assessed tree growth, log taper, crown form and branch characteristics in this trial, to determine how these are affected by different thinning levels.

Now the wood will be assessed on its performance in the sawmill.

From Wednesday 10 May, an excavator-mounted harvester head will cut 80-90 trees, a skidder will pull them from the forest and the trees will be debarked by the roadside. The logs will be cut to length and transported to a sawmill in St Helens.

The science of how the wood performs in the sawmill will be evaluated when the logs are cut at the mill to yield sawn boards.

The microscopic properties of the wood are being measured and these will be related to how the wood reacts to sawing and drying techniques.

The experiments aim to get answers to a range of research question such as:

- How much extra value has been created by the thinning and pruning operations in the *Eucalyptus nitens* plantations?
- What is the optimum management regime to produce logs of suitable size for sawmill processing?
- What measurements on standing trees can best predict wood quality and log value?
- What is the best ways to saw these plantation-grown logs and dry the sawn boards?
- Will innovations such as microwave pre-treatment improve the drying performance?

These questions are very important to answer for both the growers of the trees and the downstream processors, such as sawmills, that will use these trees in increasing amounts.

The answers may change the ways trees are being managed while they are growing, while they are harvested, and even the way they are processed into the final products that we use in everyday life.

### **For more information:**

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Research Programme Two: High-Value Wood Resources.