

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER - WHAT THE INDUSTRY WANTS

A summary of a Questionnaire

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INTRODUCTION

The following is a brief summary of the results of a questionnaire sent to all LIRA members to ascertain the effectiveness of LIRA's current extension work, and possible future improvements in accordance with our industry's requirements. The postal survey was conducted by a working group: G.M. Peacocke (LIRA's Executive Officer), P. Newman (LIRA's Extension Officer) and P. Coates (LIRA's Librarian).

In summarising the results, the working group has assumed the role of consultants to LIRA, rather than LIRA employees.

A total of 196 questionnaires was posted out, including multiple copies to larger company members (e.g. 66 to N.Z. Forest Service, 16 to N.Z. Forest Products Limited, etc.). In addressing those to larger companies, questionnaires were specifically addressed to those LIRA felt should be receiving publications, notices, etc.

A total of 76 replies was received although four of these did not arrive in time to be included in this summary. Of the 72 replies that are included :

32 were received from the N.Z. Forest Service, comprising

- 8 from logging planning officers
- 11 from logging officers
- 8 from management
- 3 from extension/training
- 2 from harvesting research;

26 were received from large private companies, comprising

- 13 from senior management
- 9 from middle management
- 2 from engineering workshop management
- 1 from work study
- 1 from logging planning officer

6 were received from contractors

3 were received from machinery manufacturers

3 were received from consultants

1 was received from a sawmiller

1 was received from a bush inspector.

As can be seen, a reasonable cross section of the industry replied and the working group was extremely pleased with the volume and quality of the response and would like to thank all those who took the required time and trouble to respond.

SUMMARY OF REPLIES

Of the 72 replies included in this summary,

- 76% had visited LIRA,
- 86% had had visits from LIRA staff.
  
- 10 only had not given a figure for number of contacts over the last year, but of those who had, the average number of contacts was over seven.
  
- 50% were able to supply between 3 and 7 names of current staff members (there are currently 13 staff including servicing staff).
- 16% had not supplied any names,
- 11% were able to name eight or more.

Preferences in types of extension generally were :

- 1st. Publications - first because these are seen as the base or reference point for obtaining further information.
  
- 2nd. Contacts - second because these are seen as a follow up to publications. Contacts included contact with LIRA staff for discussion of particular problems and for sources of further information; and contact with others in the industry with common problems, through seminars, courses, etc.
  
- 3rd. Field Demonstrations, company talks and talks to industry groups - particularly as a result of research work, to show results, performance figures, costs, advantages and disadvantages.

General Comments :

LIRA appears to be providing good and wide-ranging extension services with different aspects suiting different needs. These efforts seem to be appreciated by its members, particularly in the field of personal contact both formal and informal. Publications are read and often kept for present and future reference.

There were some suggestions for improvement :

1. Publications :

Publications could do with some improvements in appearance though this was not seen as essential.

Machinery Evaluations - considered one of the most important of LIRA's publications, would better serve the industry if they had more "depth" and were more critical. Machinery comparisons, in the nature of "Consumer" type reports were considered potentially valuable.

Handbooks were seen as very valuable tools for industry.

The number of different types of publications was considered unnecessary and confusing and it was suggested that brief "reports" and "machinery evaluations" could be combined under one title.

Digests, or "digest" type of information was considered very valuable and it was suggested that more use of these could be made by LIRA by publishing references to other work or developments in publications on a particular topic; references to new innovations and work, both local and overseas, in Newsletters and Technical Releases; etc.

2. Contacts :

More contact by LIRA in areas outside the Central North Island was considered of importance, particularly in light of the growing need for information by people in areas with large volumes coming "on stream" over the next 10 years or so.

Contact was suggested through: more talks with small groups with common problems; talks to industry association groups with plenty of visual material (slides, video, films, etc); courses, short seminars and field days in other local areas.

It was recognised that such contact would pose physical problems for LIRA's small staff, but was considered important because of the peculiar difficulties being faced in these areas, through large changes in the pattern of logging (or, as in some cases, logging being completely new to the area) and the distance they are from other sources of contact and information.

3. Working Groups :

It was suggested that working groups could be used more to review progress of current projects, and also to review a project once it is completed. It was also suggested that more advertising of a working group's efforts could be made to those members not involved in a particular working group.

4. Seminars, etc. :

Notification for short seminars, field demonstrations, courses, etc, needs to be improved. Consideration should also be given to combining these with other important activities in the area for those who have to travel long and costly distances.

5. Distribution within N.Z.F.S. :

Distribution of LIRA material within the Forest Service appears to be in urgent need of review. Although this is essentially an internal problem within the Forest Service, LIRA should do its best to see that improvements are made.

6. Timing of Annual Events :

The timing of the AGM and Open Day could be a reason for the

lack of attendance as the industry generally saw these as important extension activities and as a means for involving industry in the formulation of research priorities. It was suggested that these could possibly be combined with the major seminar to involve only one trip for those travelling long distances - making the combined events duration five days instead of three days at one time of the year and one day at another. It was pointed out that each trip involves a further two days of travelling for those outside the Central North Island.

It was also suggested that Spring and Autumn were suitable times for such meetings as personnel could better be spared from their duties at these times.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

The above general comments are only a selection of those put forward but generally reflect a consensus of opinion. There were a number of other suggestions that will be included in the full results of the questionnaire which will be given to LIRA's Director and the LIRA Board of Management for perusal and action as required. Other suggestions include suggested areas for project work, binders for publications, etc.

A copy of the questionnaire as circulated will be included in the Proceedings of this seminar, together with the explanatory notes which accompanied it. Should any LIRA Member be particularly interested a copy of the full results may be obtained from LIRA on request.

DISCUSSION - WHAT INDUSTRY WANTS

(Implications of responses to questionnaire)

Thompson : How representative of membership were responses? I expect under-represent the smaller members. What about the non-response? The 40% response mainly from the FS and larger companies. Any idea of any differential response from the membership to what the non-responders think?

Peacocke : No information on what non-responders want. The responses reflected the membership of LIRA.

Thompson : Fourteen responses from large organisations, what about the number of smaller members?

Peacocke : Smaller organisations don't have the time. Not sure why no response from smaller members. Machinery companies didn't answer.

Holder Machinery : Received questionnaire. Half finished. The excuse of always being too busy not always correct. Not too familiar with LIRA, the questionnaire was in some part lost on me, obviously aimed at other sectors of the industry.

Hunt, a Contractor (new member) : Received form, didn't fill in. Read through. I understand it asked a lot of questions about last years seminar, only two or three questions relevant to me. Too busy to fill in. Unless you are very familiar with LIRA and to the degree that their extensions go, there would be some fairly large gaps in the questionnaire.

Peacocke : Had hoped that the industry would be critical. Found that the people who replied in detail ticked individual places; whether they thought it was very good, good, less than good. Very little criticism. Most said LIRA was doing a pretty good job; some suggestions forwarded. Had hoped for more criticism.

Terlesk : Forest managers were generally happy with the information and the work that LIRA is doing.

Galbraith : In sending out our transportation working group questionnaire, we re-surveyed people who had responded back in 1978 who were interested enough to send in replies. We listed the publications relevant to transportation, wanted to know if they saw them, numbers who didn't see them was quite alarming. Disturbing to see the number of interested people who noted that they had not seen that particular publication.

Spiers : When we were set up we had a number of contributors, particularly from the contractor contributing element, they said that no way were they going to pay for work to be done if Joe Bloggs was not paying for it but getting the same information feedback to him. That attitude is, of course, reflected in our Board members' attitude; we are not the government, we are not automatically distributing material widely although we give it generally to anyone

in the industry who wants it. We have every logging contractor, every trucking contractor and sawmiller on our newsletter list, but they don't get anything else if they are not members. Other publications are restricted to members. If not a member of LIRA, doesn't see other information. Those who pay get back something for which they have paid. It may be appropriate to discuss whether that policy is still valid. The people who should be discussing it should be those who pay. That is the existing policy.

Unknown : The information munchers have made the quickest response to your questionnaire to "get it off my desk". The second thing we have always found that only after you do your first exercise do you start to get the true information. Please do it again and see how you get on, it will be quite different.

Collins, Minginui Forest : Distribution from LIRA to FS - we are consistently receiving LIRA material to distribute amongst staff, but problem is it is not being handed down to the level that you circulate. May not happen in some of the bigger stations.

Larsen : FS contributes quite considerably to the funding of LIRA. FS gets money from government, who gets it from the taxpayer. As L. Vaughan showed on projector, there are a large number of forest owners in this country with small woodlots, all taxpayers. I get LIRA publications as F.F. secretary, they go no further. We pay our money to LIRA and it goes no further.

Peacocke : Policy has been that other organisations weren't allowed to republish LIRA material. Newsletter only.

Larsen : Try to condense a four page report into something smaller for voluntary organisation.

Peacocke : Does this meeting feel that non-members should be allowed publications?

Prebble : In deference to that, I have the opinion that if you don't speculate you don't accumulate. Certainly in the case we are talking about now it is worth trying to shame people into becoming members of LIRA. Must give a bit now and then.

Gaskin : Most scientific information is eventually available to the community. Allowed time that members have access to this information, but after a period of time it becomes freely available. Could be 12 months to two years. Important to get material to the people who will make use of it eventually.