

Production forestry research conference

By PER CHRISTENSEN

A TWO-DAY conference on CALM research drew members of the Department from all branches, scientists from other organisations and members of the public.

The conference focused on production forestry, a topic of much importance to the Department, according to Joe Havel, director of research, who opened the conference.

Dr Frank McKinnell, in his keynote address, said the world faces a shortage of wood and wood products and that WA needs to become self-sufficient in this area because supplies from other nations cannot be relied upon.

He stressed the need for improved wood production

from the ever decreasing areas set aside for timber.

There is also a need for improved wood utilisation, especially of small logs from regrowth forests of karri and jarrah.

Papers were presented on softwood production on the first day of the conference.

Researchers in this area who participated in the conference were Ray Fremelin on *P. radiata* silviculture; Trevor Butcher, *P. pinaster* silviculture and *P. radiata* breeding; Richard Moore, agroforestry; Luisa de Braganca, second rotation; John McGrath, *P. radiata* fertilisation; and Graeme Siemon, improving utilisation of pine logs.

Their reports included the enormous gains made in tree form and vigour with the *P. pinaster* improvement programme and an initiative to put into practice the results of the *P. radiata* breeding programme, which involves growing and planting stock from cuttings and the establishment of a hedge artificially pollinated seed orchard (HAPSO) at Manjimup.

Hardwood silviculture and rehabilitation were covered on the second day by researchers Geoff Stone-man on jarrah silviculture; Richard Breidahl, improving karri regrowth productivity through breeding and silviculture; Gary Brennan,

improving utilisation of hardwood logs; and John Bartle, hardwood forest rehabilitation.

Their reports included news of an important breakthrough in the early thinning of karri regrowth stands, which is showing the way to commercial thinning in these forests.

The production potential of the regrowth forests of karri and jarrah were highlighted.

The utilisation of the small diameter logs poses some problems, but these are being addressed at the CALM Wood Utilisation Research Centre at Harvey.

Aspects of protection of the Department's wood resources were also covered, including fire protection in young karri regrowth stands by Lachlan McCaw and dieback research by Joanna Tippett.

Neil Burrows reported on fire and the loss of timber value.

Finally, the economics of both softwood and hardwood production were tackled by Govanna Clark and Hamish Crawford, respectively.

The conservative economic picture painted by Dr George Malajczuk gives much hope for the future

of production forestry in WA.

Executive Director Syd Shea spoke at the end of the conference, congratulating speakers and emphasising the importance of production and protection research.

On a sadder note, this is the last research conference the present Director of Research, Joe Havel, will preside over, as he announced his retirement at the end of the year.

Dr Shea paid tribute to Mr Havel's contribution on both State and international levels, saying Mr Havel's work has made an outstanding contribution to research.

Mr Havel has left his mark indelibly on the Department, not only as a researcher, but also as a person of outstanding integrity.

Although he will be missed, Mr Havel has left the Department with an efficient and well-trained research branch which, I have every confidence, will carry on the good work.

We would all like to wish Joe the best for the future, and extend to him a standing invitation to future research conferences.

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and reducing the distance between hives to increase the number per hectare.

Action from CALM that may be discussed by the committee which was brought up at the workshop includes: looking at quarantine situations with dieback; burning practices that decrease the flora available for pollen; and land use that is compatible with beekeeping to allow more land to be used for that purpose.