



Blueprint for NZ forest and wood industry

22 November 2021

The Forest Owners Association of New Zealand says the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation has laid down a blueprint for the New Zealand forest and wood industry, with the release of 'Forest Products in the Global Economy', as part of the COP26 meeting and events in Glasgow. Source: Timberbiz

The New Zealand Forest Owners Association Chief Executive, and former Chair of the UN Advisory Committee on Sustainable Forest Industries, David Rhodes, says while trees are best known here for their ability to sequester carbon from the atmosphere, the future of forest products, as a replacement for petrochemical sourced materials, is equally important.

"This just released FAO Report details what can be done with both timber itself, and what can be achieved as well using wood materials," he said.

"Much of it is already well proven technology. What has been lacking is the realisation of the dreadful consequences on the environment if we continue to use vast volumes of fossil fuels, steel, concrete and plastics.

"The FAO identifies what it calls resistance by vested interests in making way for a sustainable bioeconomy, and it says the inertia these interests create "should be actively addressed and tackled. The UN FAO Report cites a New Zealand MPI report, issued in 2017, 'Primary Sector Science Roadmap' which identified desired potential developments, in particular "new forest ecosystem services such as biorefinery forests, the use of short-rotation trees for biomass and bioenergy products."

David Rhodes says MPI has updated and begun to act on the 2017 report with a 'Forest Industry Transformation Plan', designed to lessen New Zealand's dependence on log exports, increase timber production in New Zealand and develop new sustainable technologies to utilise large volumes of wood which otherwise may be left in the forest after harvest.

"We are already seeing a move in New Zealand towards using wood fuel to replace coal in school and dairy factory boilers, but the transformation is going to be huge from now on," he said.

"The FAO cites all sorts of developments, such as using wood fibre to replace viscose and polyester, through ventures such as the Swedish based Tree to Textile AB.

"Put together, wood derived materials and products will constitute what the FAO Report calls a necessary 'rethink of the global economic system."

Source: timberbiz.com.au/blueprint-for-nz-forest-and-wood-industry/