

# A harvest result to confound the experts

Malcolm Mackenzie



Ready for harvest



Harvested at the end of March



Replanted in July

Many forestry experts frequently speak or write of the need for scale to create good returns. They emphasise that to cover the costs of roading, skid preparation, and harvesting we need to have stands with scale and preferably larger than 10 hectares. While this is certainly the case in many circumstances, the following example of a recent harvest in the north King Country defies that conventional wisdom. It may also provide some comfort to farm foresters who have worked away pruning their pine trees.

Ian and Heather Wilson have been long-term farm foresters following on from Ian's parents Lyn and Keith at Otewa near Otorohanga. They have had the faith and discipline to plant one hectare on each of their two farms every year for the past 27 years. This has allowed family labour to maintain a high standard of silviculture including timely pruning.

They recently harvested one hectare of 26-year-old high pruned radiata pine which were planted at six metre by six metre final spacings. Grazing throughout the life of the pines with sheep provided a valuable source of feed and maintained a weed free block. The block was chosen to use existing tracks which meant roading and skid preparation costs were nil.

The logging gang consisted of two men and one digger which cost less than \$500 to transport as they were working nearby. Harvest management fees and levy came to \$3,550 which meant the final nett return after the deduction of these fees and the forest growers' levy is \$54,119. This equates to an average of \$94.71 a tonne. The proportion of nett return attributable to the pruned logs is 78 per cent.

The Wilsons were pleased with all aspects of their first harvest especially dealing with Wood Marketing Services and their logging gang who made the whole process very easy and worthwhile. And the high pruning paid off.

*Malcolm Mackenzie is a member of the Waitomo Branch of the NZFFA.* 🌲

Grade	Production in tonnes	Price per tonne	Gross income	Nett income before harvest management
Pruned	318	\$179	\$56,945	\$44,284
A	187	\$118	\$22,066	\$10,910
K	42	\$105	\$4,394	\$1,888
KIS	25	\$84	\$2,101	\$587
<b>Total</b>	<b>573</b>		<b>\$85,506</b>	<b>\$57,669</b>