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# TRAINING AND AWARENESS IN THE LOGGING INDUSTRY

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## ABSTRACT

*The Logging Workforce Survey queried loggers on the extent and type of training they received, and their contact with, and awareness of, other aspects of the industry.*

*It is clear that most loggers underwent an "informal" type of training, either by learning skills themselves, or being taught by a more experienced co-worker. While most of those working in the industry had direct knowledge of other logging operations and some types of processing plant, less contact was had with two organisations directly linked with the industry, namely The New Zealand Logging Industry Research Association (LIRA) and the Logging and Forest Industry Training Board (L&FITB).*

the level and types of training loggers had undergone, and to consider their thoughts on training requirements necessary to handle the increase in harvesting activity expected over the next two decades. A further section of the questionnaire looked at the knowledge loggers have of various institutions intended to assist the industry, and what means (if any) were used by the workforce to keep in contact with the sector at large.

The surveys involved interviews with 202, 97 and 91 loggers in the Bay of Plenty, Northland and Otago/Southland respectively. Where data for all three areas is bracketed in the text, the Bay of Plenty case is given first, followed by Northland then Otago/Southland.

## INTRODUCTION

To date, reports arising from the Logging Workforce Surveys conducted in the Northland, Bay of Plenty and Otago/Southland regions have focused on; the demographic nature of the workforce (Gaskin et al, 1987 and 1988, Wilson et al, 1987), job satisfaction (Wilson et al, 1988), and accidents and safety (Gaskin et al, 1988). This Report discusses the issue of training and the extent to which loggers use other sources of information and experience as a way of maintaining contact with the industry and its developments.

Specifically, the survey was used as an opportunity to collect information on

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### Length and Time at Secondary School

The majority of loggers from all three areas had less than four years secondary schooling (73.5%/59.8%/67.4%). However, more of the Northland workforce (37.4%) held a School Certificate pass, or better, compared with 19.9% for the Bay of Plenty and 21.6% for Otago/Southland. This observation is possibly a consequence of the restricted range of work opportunities in the Northern region - an area currently suffering one of the highest unemployment rates in the country. Further details about the level of secondary schooling is given in Table 1.

Table 1 - Level of Secondary Education

Years at Secondary School	Bay of Plenty %	Northland %	Southland %
None	3.5	7.6	2.3
1 year or less	7.5	3.3	9.3
1 to 3 years	62.5	48.9	55.8
More than 3 years	26.5	40.2	32.6
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

### Tertiary Education

Only a minority of loggers appeared to have had any further trade (or other) training after leaving school. Some 18.1% of the Northland workforce fell into this category along with 15.8% of those from the Bay of Plenty. Otago/Southland looked to be best off in this regard with 29.7% of those spoken to having had such training.

### Formal Training in Logging

Given the "craft" nature of logging work (Smith, 1980), formal training has traditionally been minimal within the industry, although this situation has been steadily changing since the mid 1970s. However, it is interesting to

note that the majority of loggers surveyed still had not undergone any formal instruction or skill recognition. Only 42.6% from the Bay of Plenty, and a very low 10.3% from Northland and 20.5% from Otago/Southland, could lay claim to some form of organised instruction or work skill assessment, with most of this being via the L&FITB Loggers Certificate Scheme. Table 2 shows the range of instruction, and the amount of skill recognition received by those working in the Bay of Plenty who had undertaken formal training. Too few cases were present in both Northland and Otago/Southland on which to base useful regional comparisons, this being quite possibly a reflection of the centralised nature of current training programmes.

Table 2 - Type of Formal Training and Skill Assessment  
for Bay of Plenty Loggers

Source	%
N.Z Forest Products Limited	19.8
Through N.Z. Forest Service	4.9
Ranger School	2.5
Kaingaroa Logging Company (Tasman)	19.8
Training Officers	8.6
L & FITB Certification*	43.2
Hauler Course	1.2
	100.0 %

\* The L&FITB Certification is not a training course but rather a means of skill recognition

Table 3 - Type of Information Training for those in this Category

Source	Bay of Plenty %	Northland %	Southland %
More experienced bushman	48.5	40.7	54.5
Boss or Supervisor	11.0	12.8	18.2
Self Taught	39.7	43.0	20.8
Other	0.8	3.5	6.5
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

### Informal Training

A significant number of loggers across all regions, but particularly in the Bay of Plenty and Northland, said they were self-taught (39.7%/43.0%/20.8%). However, except for Northland, a larger proportion were reportedly trained by a more experienced logger (48.5%/40.7%/54.5%). From the comments given by loggers, the boss or supervisor does not appear to have played a major role in this process (Table 3).

Interestingly though, some 88.1% of Bay of Plenty loggers, along with 83.0% and 86.6% of their Northland and Otago/Southland counterparts respectively, felt that the availability of formal training would improve the chance of recruiting newcomers to the industry.

In spite of the fact that the majority of loggers had obtained their skills "informally" from their co-workers, the majority of those interviewed in all three regions were satisfied with their training (65.6%/68.9%/56.6%). However, in the Bay of Plenty, nearly one-quarter of the sample (24.0%) were less than satisfied in this regard. The corresponding figure for Northland and Otago/Southland was 16.7% and 13.1% respectively.

### AWARENESS WITHIN THE LOGGING INDUSTRY

Given the much discussed expansion forecast for the forestry sector,

considerable changes will need to occur throughout the logging industry - particularly in terms of the recruitment, and training and development of a more skilled and larger workforce.

Of importance in this respect will be agencies such as LIRA and L&FITB. However, the degree to which these organisations can be effective in this role will, to some extent, depend upon their being visible and accessible to all segments of the logging industry. In order to test the current situation, it seemed opportune, as a part of the Logging Workforce Surveys, to find out from loggers the extent to which they were familiar with such agencies and their activities.

### Awareness of LIRA

Only about half of those covered by the survey (in each region) claimed to know anything about LIRA and its functions (49.5%/49.5%/46.7%), and, much less than half had seen LIRA publications (47.5%/40.0%/32.2%). As for having direct contact with LIRA staff, only 28% of those from Northland and 28.7% from Otago/Southland gave a positive response. The figure for the Bay of Plenty (not unexpectedly) was somewhat higher at 43.6%. Of the loggers who did know something of LIRA - most considered there was a need for an organisation like this (72.3%/85.7%/97.6%).



Figure 1 - "Less than half the loggers surveyed had seen LIRA publications"

### Awareness of L & FITB

It appears that only a minority of those working in the industry had any knowledge of the role of the L&FITB if the responses from the three survey areas is any indication. Less than one-quarter of the sample from the Bay of Plenty and Northland regions professed to be aware of what the L&FITB actually does (24.8%/21.3%). The corresponding figure for Otago/Southland was somewhat higher at 34.4%. Furthermore, fewer than one in ten loggers had viewed a L&FITB publication in both North Island regions (9.6%/8.5%), with a slightly higher proportion of readers being in evidence in the Otago/Southland (16.5%). Except in the Otago/Southland case, a similar percentage of those surveyed had met a L&FITB staff member (10.9%/19.1%/27.8%).

Notably, however, of those who suggested they had some understanding of what the L&FITB does, only 48.9% in the Bay of Plenty supported the need for this sort of body (with some 43.1% being unsure on the issue). In Northland and Otago/Southland though, much more positive support was in evidence, with the corresponding figures being 75.6% and 93.1% respectively.

### CONTACT WITH OTHER ASPECTS OF THE INDUSTRY

While it was noted earlier that the amount of formal training received by the workforce was quite low, it is clear that skills and knowledge can be acquired through sifting other published material and via general interaction



with others working either within logging or within the forest sector at large. A brief description is now given of the extent and form of such contact across the three regions covered by the study.

### Reading Logging Magazines

The majority of those in logging appear to read logging publications (73.6%/58.9%/53.3%) with a reasonable number of workers, notably in Otago/Southland, seeing magazines on at least a monthly basis (32.7%/41.1%/57.8%).

### Visiting Processing Plants

About three in four loggers had been to a processing plant (74.6%/79.6%/82.2%) with the most common type of visit in Northland and Otago/Southland being to a sawmill. In the Bay of Plenty, the integrated pulpmill/sawmill complex was the most popular destination.

The frequency of all such visits for the average logger appears to be quite small in the Bay of Plenty where, of those who had made such excursions, only 26.2% had been on more than two occasions. Indeed, contact with processing plants seems to be more favoured in Northland and Otago/Southland where 45.7% and 76.2% respectively of "visiting loggers" had gone more than twice to see some

type of processing activity. A very sizeable percentage of those making such visits had done so within the last four years (66.4%/69.2%/88.2%).

### Visiting Other Logging Operations

The majority of the workforce had been to look at other logging crews in action (66.2%/63.2%/82.06%) with much fewer than half of these observations being confined to the same forest (42.5%/35.0%/31.4%).

### Other Aspects of Contact

Most of those employed in the industry were able to say that they had met the forest manager (62.0%/65.6%/82.6%) but, in the case of the Bay of Plenty and Northland, this assumes a sizeable minority have had no such contact. However, for all that, only about one in four of the workforce across the three regions considered the forest manager to be the best source of knowledge on what was happening in the industry. In fact, the one method of information transfer most favoured by those in logging in the Bay of Plenty and Otago/Southland, was "talking in the pub" (35.3%/49.3%). For Northland, the most popular means of gaining information was through "informal gatherings" of various types. Of importance here is evidence that formal channels of communication seem not to be favoured by this workforce.

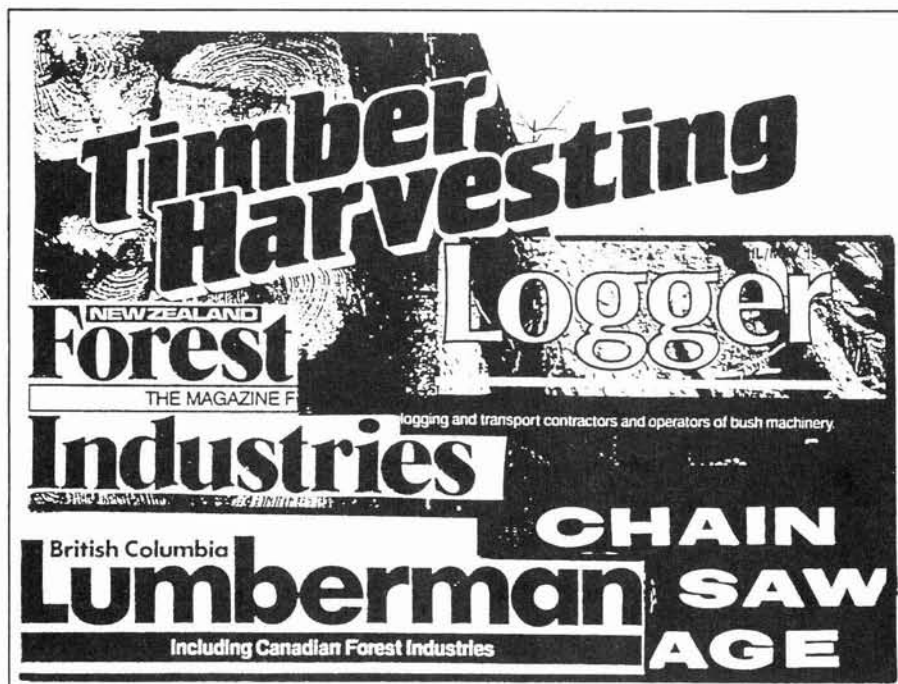


Figure 2 - The majority of loggers read logging magazines

## DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In their assessment of the value of training, the Review Committee on Education and Training in the Forestry Industry (Probine et al, 1987, p 30) comments that "Training in logging and forestry skills is important because the success of the industry depends on the efficiency, and therefore the skill, of the people carrying out what are, largely, manual operations." They go on to say that "It is also important to have a well trained workforce because almost all of the operations carried out in the forest are potentially dangerous and, for the poorly trained, the operations are very dangerous."

The results quoted earlier would suggest that the level of formal training within the industry is unsatisfactorily low in terms of the philosophy adopted by the Review Committee. It must be accepted though that data from the Logging Workforce Surveys does not indicate a clear relationship between formal training and accident rates. To establish the presence of any link between those two factors will demand a more in-depth look at the logging environment than was taken in this study. On the other hand, it is quite obvious that, in order to effectively produce the large workforce needed to cope with the growth predicted for the sector, a training structure will be required that reaches a much higher proportion of those working in the industry than is presently the case.

Closely tied to this requirement will be the extent to which those working in the industry are aware of the operation of the training and research institutes directly concerned with logging. From the results noted above, it is evident that the level of awareness of the average logger in this respect is rather low. Whether this lack of visibility need be of concern to organisations like LIRA and the L&FITB depends upon how these agencies view their role and who they think the targets of their activity should be. Nonetheless, it would seem that any agency concerned with promoting improvements within the sector in areas like training and accident prevention, could well establish a much higher profile with the workforce in general than that existing at present.

Finally, it is clear that loggers do avail themselves of other opportunities to pick up information about their own industry and the forestry sector at large. However, many of these opportunities involve informal contact which ties in closely with the general features observed in respect of training. As far as planning for the future of the sector is concerned, decisions will need to be made in the training arena as to how reliant the industry wishes to be on the informal acquisition of work skills in logging as a means of preparing a workforce appropriate to a forest sector that has the potential for marked expansion.

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