

Southern Tree Breeding Association

Generating increased profits through innovative genetic solutions



Media Release

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AKD SOFTWOODS JOINS THE STBA

The Southern Tree Breeding Association is pleased to announce that AKD Softwoods has joined the Association in its *P radiata* tree improvement program.

Associated Kiln Driers Pty Ltd trading as **AKD Softwoods** (www.akd.com.au) is a privately owned company, based in Colac, Victoria. AKD has over 40 years experience in the pine industry through sawmilling operations and plantation management. The company plans to expand its pine plantation estate in order to meet the resource needs of its Colac sawmilling operations.

AKD's plantation estate is located in the Otways, Ballarat and Green Triangle regions covering a variety of growing conditions and management requirements. AKD owns over 3,500 hectares of pine plantation ranging in age from 10 to 45 years. It also manages another 500 hectares under agreement. Using intensive silviculture regimes, AKD aims to produce significant volumes of mature, high quality wood.

AKD Resource Manager, Neil Harris believes the STBA breeding program provides genetic material and supporting information that will allow AKD to select the best genetic material for its operations. Dr Tony McRae (STBA General Manager) says cooperative breeding is more cost effective for individual Members and, because of larger population sites and increased selection intensity, greater gains can be achieved for individual companies like AKD Softwoods. AKD will also benefit from participation in major research projects targeting economic breeding objectives, juvenile wood initiative and genetic evaluation.

The Breeding Objectives project is a collaborative research project between STBA, CSIRO-Forestry and Forest Products and The Forest and Wood Products Research and Development Corporation. '*Breeding Radiata Pine to Maximise Profits from Solid Wood Products*' aims to develop economic breeding objectives and selection indices for STBA to select the most profitable trees for all solid timber products manufactured by the Australian radiata pine industry. It will allow us to target specific production environments and business structures of Members.

The STBA Pine breeding program is entering an exciting phase of progress as Members capture the following benefits:

- TREEPLAN® genetic values which are routinely updated as new trial data is collected. TREEPLAN® is predicted to double the rate of genetic gain that can be achieved with conventional systems. It uses optimal BLUP statistical analysis on all the performance information and pedigree in the national Pine database.
- The rolling front breeding strategy enables us to infuse new genes into the program on a regular basis.
- Customised economic Breeding Objectives information for each Member's business will allow us to optimise selection strategies for profit.
- The Juvenile Wood Initiative project aims to improve the quality and/or reduce the quantity of juvenile wood to tailor genes to plantations in Radiata Pine. This should greatly improve the amount of recoverable timber from the investment product.
- We are pleased to have ADK Softwoods join the national cooperative and share in the benefits of the Association.

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