

The Border Watch

Article from Thursday, March 26, 2009: Ellie Turner

THE Mount Gambier-based **Southern Tree Breeding Association** met with four senior managers from the leading Swedish Forestry Research Institute, **Skogforsk**, who visited the Lower South East on Friday. The organisations have shared a professional relationship for two years following Skogforsk's interest in adopting the data management and genetic evaluation software system, **TREEPLAN®**, run by the Southern Tree Breeding Association.

Skogforsk has used the system to help improve the performance of trees grown commercially in the country's plantations, as seen in the South East.

The innovative analytical software allows industry breeders and researchers to assess genetic aspects of the trees and improve the genetic quality, therefore increasing productivity per hectare.

Parent trees with favourable characteristics such as small branches, straight trunks and dense timber can then be selected for pollination, raising the industry's cost efficiency.

STBA General Manager Tony McRae said although Sweden's industry was far larger, breeding four species of trees while Australia only bred two, Skogforsk had found the STBA database valuable.

"It's a matter of selection; creating new children, picking the best ones and using them as the parents of the next generation," Mr McRae said.

A TREEPLAN® pilot program was contracted in Sweden two years ago for the two main species, Scotts pine and Norway spruce, and the technology was explored.

Another contract was signed 18 months ago where Skogforsk would use the database and is now part of a five-year plan with the STBA.

"As a research organisation Skogforsk is highly interested in innovative measures and liaise closely with with the practical side of the industry," Mr McRae said.

"TREEPLAN® assists in the link between research and physical production, which benefits the industry."

Skogforsk managing director Dr Jan Fryk, vice managing director Dr Kaj Rosen, raw material supply research director Lennart Radstrom and forest production research director Ola Rosvall collaborated with Mr McRae and various other forest authorities.

While in southern Australia they took a tour regarding general forestry and silviculture, observing how the country maintained a sustainable forestry sector while trying to minimise an adverse environmental impact.



Forestry SA planning and development executive general manager Dr Jim O'Hehir, Dr Lennart Radstrom, STBA General Manager Dr Tony McRae, Dr Jan Fryk, Dr Kaj Rosen and Dr Ola Rosvall gather in the Mount Gambier Forestry SA office before touring several South East plantations. Picture: **ELLIE TURNER**