

## Scion and GE trees

2 messages

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**Chris Lang** <chris@chrislang.org>

**18 December 2007 11:09**

To: Jacky.James@scionresearch.com

Dear Ms James,

I am working on an article for the WRM Bulletin ([www.wrm.org.uy](http://www.wrm.org.uy)) about the forestry research that Ensis, Scion and CSIRO are currently carrying out, in particular research relating to plantations and genetically engineered trees.

I couldn't find any confirmation on the Ensis website that Ensis' research includes research into GE trees. I asked Anne Lawrence at Ensis and she replied that "The CSIRO Scientists within Australia in Ensis and the new division CSIRO Forest Biosciences are not doing research on genetically modified or engineered trees."

She suggested that I contact you to ask you about Scion's research. I would therefore be grateful if you could confirm whether Ensis is carrying out research into genetically engineered trees and whether such research includes field trials?

Scion has, I believe, planted a field trial of genetically engineered Radiata pine and Norway spruce trees in Rotorua (<http://www.scionresearch.com/environmental+risk+and+management.aspx?PageContentMode=1>).

Is this trial plantation ongoing, and is it part of Ensis' research?

In addition, Scion has signed a research and development agreement with ArborGen, the world's biggest GE tree research company (<http://www.scionresearch.com/media+releases.aspx?PageContentID=982>). Could you please confirm whether this agreement involves research into GE trees.

Is Scion carrying out any other research into GE trees? Could you please describe any GE tree research projects that Scion is involved in - or point me to the relevant parts of the Scion website. Thanks!

My deadline for this article has been postponed until next month, but I would like to write the article as soon as possible, so I would be grateful if you could reply before the end of this week. Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you. Please consider your response to be on-the-record.

Regards, Chris Lang

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**Jacky.James@scionresearch.com <Jacky.James@scionresearch.com>**

**20 December 2007  
01:07**

To: Chris Lang <chris@chrislang.org>

Dear Chris,

Thank you for your enquiry. I apologise for the slight delay in responding, I am trying to wind down for my maternity leave and its made for a very mucky week.

We confirm that Scion is currently engaged in research relating to plantations and genetically engineered trees. This work is not being carried out as part of the Ensis collaboration.

As you can see on our website, Scion planted a field trial of genetically engineered trees in Rotorua in 2003. The express purpose of this trial is to assess the impacts, if any, of transgenic trees on the environment. Results to date show that soil microbial populations and insect biodiversity in a GE pine field test is unaffected.

Monitoring of this trial is ongoing and regular reports are supplied to New Zealand's Environmental Risk Management Authority. These reports are available on the ERMA website ([www.ermanz.govt.nz](http://www.ermanz.govt.nz)). Also, the trial is audited by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) every six months. MAF have confirmed the compliance of the trial with ERMA regulations.

In addition to this field trial, with its associated work on environmental risk assessment, Scion is also conducting laboratory-based research into wood characteristics, including improved pulpability. An example of this research was recently published in the PNAS journal, a paper that was highlighted on page 18 of our 2007 Annual Report which is also available on our website.

As part of our commercial activities, Scion is providing research and development services to assist ArborGen with their tree improvement programme. We can confirm that our service to ArborGen supports their research into GE trees.

Please feel free to attribute our feedback to Dr Elspeth MacRae, Scion Group Manager for Biomaterials Research.

Kind regards

Jacky

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