

## *HITMAN for Processor Heads* *Quality Sorting Prior to Logmaking* *Is this the Harvesters 'Holy Grail'?*

HITMAN has become the standard for testing stiffness on logs destined for structural uses, and many are now using HITMAN hand tools to maximize production of structural logs in their harvesting and logmaking operations. This application of HITMAN technology has resulted in the extraction of greater value from forests by enabling the sorting of higher stiffness logs from those better suited to non-structural uses, by detecting differences in stiffness otherwise impossible to pick by eye or other simple measure.

HITMAN technology has also been applied to standing trees, enabling ranking of stands for suitability to structural log harvesting, and can also be used in the valuation of forests for tender as stumpage, or for sale. The measurement of standing trees in mid or late rotation inventory, or in MARVL pre-harvest assessment, provides a valuable tool to combine with standard density measures to accurately predict MSG or engineered wood product out-turn.



Despite growing application of this technology to identify and sort structural logs, it will always be best to know whether a stem is of structural quality before logmaking, so logs can be cut to the right length to meet customer specifications. Once logs are cut it is often too late to measure the quality, which may require them to be sent to a different customer - involving expensive re-handling and loss of volume from re-cutting to a shorter length - or worse they get sent to the wrong customer incurring extra transport cost, and fail to meet specification.

into a Waratah 626 Bigwood processor. The Fibre-gen project with support from John Deere Waratah, Technology NZ and FWPA has demonstrated the feasibility of the concept, and now needs support from prospective lead users to confirm key performance criteria and field testing sites. The final stages of development are now being planned to cover full integration with the processor head controls and optimisation systems, to be followed by field testing and operational evaluation.

The concept will see HITMAN assessment prior to logmaking as the processor head progressively works along the felled stem – delivering structural wood into structural length logs, and non-structural wood into alternative log grades – thus structural quality is extracted while limiting wastage of time, wood, and transport, so logs are delivered to specification with quality to meet customer needs..... this must be close to the harvester's 'Holy Grail'?

This is where the HITMAN processor head application comes in. Development is now well advanced with the first on-head tool incorporated

