

REVOLUTIONARY IN-FIELD GADGET COULD AID IN THE PROTECTION OF OUR FOREST TREES

Rebecca McDougal and Emily Telfer from Scion's Forest Protection team have recently been confirmed as winners of the Freedom for You grants programme!

In September 2014, Ubiquitome Ltd announced their "Freedom for You" grants program. It provided an opportunity to win a new in-field portable quantitative polymerase chain reaction (qPCR) device.

It was thought that this would be a fantastic tool for research programs in the both the Forest Protection and Forest Genetics teams here at Scion. This device could provide the ability to diagnose disease, such as red needle cast or kauri dieback, quantitatively in the field to more efficiently assess breeding trials and the like. Rebecca and Emily submitted an application and quickly reached the finalist stage in January 2015, when it was announced at the Plant and Animal Genome XXIII international Conference at San Diego, California. This meant that they would at least be the recipients of qPCR reagents and consumables, project design consultation and technical support. From the cohort of ten finalists, three would be selected to win a device, based on scientific merit, originality and how meaningful the remote/field qPCR capabilities offered by the Freedom4 would be to the work.

After being confirmed finalists, the details of specific diagnostic assays and DNA extracts from both pure cultures of the pathogens (*P. pluvialis* and *P. agathidicida*) as well as DNA from infected material (pine needles and

soil) were sent to the Ubiquitome team for testing. This testing was performed on their Freedom4 device, and on another instrument for comparison. Results of this testing can be accessed here: <http://www.ubiquitomebio.com/trees-app-note-landing-page.html>.

Unfortunately, due to manufacturing delays, Ubiquitome are unable provide us with a Freedom4 device until 2016. Until then we have to remain satisfied with the kudos of winning.

Rebecca McDougal (Forest Protection) and Emily Telfer (Forest Genetics)

<http://www.ubiquitomebio.com/news/freedom-for-you-grants-program-finalist-profiles-emily-telfer-rebecca-mcdougal>



FORESTRY AND GOVERNMENT SIGN UP TO SHARE BIOSECURITY READINESS AND RESPONSE

The Government Industry Agreement (GIA) is a partnership-driven approach to managing biosecurity readiness and response. It provides industry with a seat at the table with the Ministry for Primary Industries to participate in important decisions during an incursion or eradication response. Importantly, it takes that partnership approach a step further by also sharing responsibilities (and costs through a negotiated process) for being prepared for incursions that could threaten our primary industries. The kiwifruit industry through Kiwifruit Vine Health were the first to sign in May 2014, and since then another five industries have signed: Pipfruit New Zealand, New Zealand Pork, New Zealand Equine Health Association, and Onions New Zealand. The commercial plantation forestry sector represented by the NZ Forest Owners Association being the most recent industry to sign on 5 November 2015.

I was honoured to be invited to witness the signing of the GIA Deed at Parliament. Having a long interest in forest biosecurity it was very pleasing to take part in a process that marked the start of a formal partnership to provide joint decision making on biosecurity matters. I'm confident that the partnership will strengthen New Zealand's ability to maintain the health of our plantation forests. Both Minister Nathan Guy and Chief Executive David Rhodes reiterated that by speaking about the importance of managing and dealing with biosecurity risks.

Associate Minister Goodhew added that MPI has worked with the forestry sector in biosecurity surveillance for over 50 years and the relationship will be further enhanced under GIA.

The first meeting after signing has already taken place, where options for the forestry Operational Agreement that will underpin the GIA Deed were discussed.

Lindsay Bulman



From left Associate Minister Jo Goodhew, Minister for Primary Industries Nathan Guy, FOA Chief Executive David Rhodes, and Lindsay Bulman at the signing.