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### Special Issue:

## IUFRO International Forest Biosecurity Conference 16 – 20 March 2009, Rotorua, New Zealand

Tod Ramsfield and Brian Richardson

*Scion, Private Bag 3020, Rotorua 3046, New Zealand*

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### Guest Editorial

This Special Issue of the Journal comprises peer-reviewed papers that were submitted following the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) International Forest Biosecurity Conference. This conference featured over 90 speakers and 27 poster presentations from 14 different countries, representing a huge body of knowledge aimed at protecting forests from the risks posed by invasive insects, weeds and diseases.

Forests make vital contributions to economies, the conservation of biodiversity, environmental protection and to global carbon and water cycles. These benefits are increasingly at risk from biosecurity threats resulting from increased international trade and tourism; and also from changing climates.

In the context of this forum, the term “biosecurity” refers to the exclusion, eradication, or effective management of pests (weeds, insects and diseases). There are many recent examples of the destruction of large forest areas, entire ecosystems, and even threats to species through the spread or change in risk patterns of forest pests. Examples include: devastation in East Asia caused by the pinewood nematode (*Bursaphelenchus xylophilus* (Steiner and Buhrer) Nickle), which is an exotic parasite vectored by native insects; emerald ash borer (*Agrilus planipennis* Fairmaire) spreading through parts of the USA and Canada; and sudden oak death (*Phytophthora ramorum* Werres, De Cock & Man in 't Veld), an invasive pathogen in California and Europe. The spread of weeds is equally concerning. For example, *Buddleja davidii* Franch., already one of the most widespread and costly weeds in Europe, is expanding its range in other parts of the world, New Zealand included.

The economic and global relevance of biosecurity was illustrated in all of the conference presentations. Delegates represented an enormous range of disciplines, all with an important role to play in supporting effective biosecurity systems. Included were: forest pathologists; entomologists; weed ecologists; molecular biologists; meteorologists; modelling specialists; and many others. This diverse gathering highlighted the need for effective communication across science disciplines, which is what this conference facilitated.

The papers in this special issue provide a permanent record of some of the topics discussed at the main conference. A workshop sponsored by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development was held during the conference. Keynote presentations given at this workshop have been compiled in a separate supplement to this volume of the *New Zealand Journal of Forestry Science*.

The conference from which these proceedings arise was the first of its kind ever to be held. By bringing together all the various disciplines associated with forest biosecurity, it provided a unique opportunity to explore the

full richness and complexity of this globally important subject. We trust that the enthusiasm generated at this meeting will give rise to similar conferences on a regular basis, creating an international forum for exchanging ideas that benefit us all.