

### Newsletter to participants May 2008

#### Levy on methyl bromide imports

It has been encouraging that the proposed levy of \$1/kg of methyl bromide imported into New Zealand has been implemented at the distributor level for over 90% of imports. So far only two companies, Ecolab and Boracure, have declined to participate despite the full support of the Pest Management Association of New Zealand (PMANZ).

In the four months between December and March the levy delivered over \$56,000. The importance of this industry contribution in leveraging funding from other sources cannot be overemphasised (see Funding Update). The allocation of levy funds will be recommended by the STIMBR Project Subcommittee to the AGM as part of the annual business plan and voted on by all members.

#### Funding update

A key objective of STIMBR is to seek funding to support a prioritised work programme advancing its primary aim of enhancing market access and biosecurity for goods and products. This will be achieved by reducing the release of methyl bromide into the atmosphere and reducing its overall use in the long term. The potential for subscriptions and levy funding to leverage funding from other sources is already evident with Genera's successful application to the Sustainable Management Fund (SMF) and the STIMBR bid making it into Phase 2 of the Sustainable Farming Funding (SFF) round.

**SMF.** Subject to the finalisation of an agreed work programme, Genera has been awarded \$122,000 to advance the use of generated phosphine as an alternative to methyl bromide for key export crops including logs, sawn timber, apples and onions. The proposed STIMBR contribution of \$30,000 signalled support and involvement from the wider stakeholder group and was critical to the bid's success.

**SFF.** An application to the SFF has been successful in reaching the Phase 2 stage. A three year programme is proposed to include:

- the development of comprehensive phosphine Ct data for all *Arhopalus* life stages
- review, evaluate and carry out application trials for highest priority alternative fumigant (excluding phosphine)
- undertake major operational trial of site level management of insect contamination using light traps
- review and produce a best practice fumigant stewardship manual.

Funding update continued...

A total of \$150,000 a year is being sought from SFF with cash and in-kind support of \$105,000 from STIMBR and its members (30,000 from levy funds).

PGSF. A programme focused on longer term research components of the STIMBR strategy, in particular risk management and quality assurance, has been developed by Scion. If it is successful in attracting FRST funding it will complement the short term projects of the SMF and SFF programmes.

The programme recognises that simply replacing one fumigant with another is not an acceptable long-term solution for New Zealand. The new approach is to develop an ecologically-based, risk assessment system that ensures quarantine pests are treated only when needed and, where necessary, with the most benign fumigant possible. This approach will redefine the way in which forestry exports are protected and in which trading partners are assured of pest-free products.

STIMBR will have a key role in ensuring the integration of all these research programmes to prevent any duplication of effort and to maximise the synergies between them.

STIMBR funding contributions to these projects are still subject to membership approval.

#### Non-levy support

We are pleased to acknowledge contributions to STIMBR from organisations with a keen interest in methyl bromide reduction, but who are non-users of the fumigant.

Noted in our last newsletter were Biosecurity New Zealand, Ministry of Economic Development, Scion, and Crop and Food Research.

We can now add the Ministry for the Environment and Ports of Nelson and Tauranga and Northport.

We would also acknowledge a contribution from Pentarch Forest Products.



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#### Sawn timber trial

A successful trial was completed earlier this year showing directly-generated phosphine and bottled 2% phosphine could replace methyl bromide for fumigation of sawn timber against hitch-hiking Arhopalus beetles.

A carefully replicated and audited trial observed by Biosecurity New Zealand involved 16 and 24 hour exposure periods and provided 100% control of seeded beetles.

The primary objective of the trial was to gain acceptance by Australian biosecurity authorities for phosphine for this application.

## Indian phosphine trial

An important trial is underway to gain approval from Indian biosecurity authorities for in-transit fumigation of logs with phosphine. The need for this trial highlights the comprehensive validation data required by our trading partners in approving new biosecurity treatments. It is this level of assurance which the proposed SFF funded project aims to deliver for specific

high quarantine risks such as *Arhopalus*.

The trial, supported by STIMBR and being undertaken by Genera, Biosecurity New Zealand, and Forest Owners Association,



involves containerised logs infested with key high risk insects to a design agreed by Indian officials. A successful outcome should clear the way for phosphine in-transit fumigation of logs to India and a significant reduction in New Zealand's methyl bromide use.

### Symposium on Alternatives to Methyl Bromide

Twenty eight possible alternatives were discussed with 90 government, and industry representatives at Te Papa on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> March in Wellington to review treatment alternatives to use at our borders. Advice was also given by experts from the USA and Australia.

Key points from the Symposium:

- Collectively industry, government and overseas organisations have to move from the search for a single solution to diverse solutions, and that requires differentiated but coordinated research.
- Research pipelines are required for the short term, medium term and long term solutions.
- The governance group must be responsible for making sure each research pipeline is properly funded and coordinated.
- There are some priorities that would provide immediate benefits, such as export logs being treated with phosphine for the Indian and Malaysian markets.
- Work has already been undertaken on alternatives to MBr, but it needs more coordination.
- When methyl bromide is no longer available alternatives are likely to be more expensive.
- There's still a lot of work to be done and it can't be done by one person or one group, it must be a partnership between all stakeholders involved with each playing their role.
- Despite it being a global issue, NZ's trading commodity mix means that we must pursue NZ's interests first and foremost but not losing sight of our trading partner's concerns. Internationally we all have a different perspective from our neighbours on this issue but we do need to address alternative options as they arise.

Papers from the symposium will be available shortly.

For more information contact Ken Glassey at MAF BNZ - [glasseyk@maf.govt.nz](mailto:glasseyk@maf.govt.nz)

# Where to from here?

## STIMBR Incorporated/AGM

At a member meeting on 2 April, 2008 it was agreed that STIMBR should move from its present loose association to a more formal incorporated society.

A constitution is under development with a draft recently circulated to all members.

We aim to have the constitution adopted at our first AGM in Wellington on the 8<sup>th</sup> of July and a work programme and budget for the year approved.

The meeting will elect a management committee and officers, as well as a project sub-committee, set subscription rate etc.

Nominations in accordance with the draft constitution will be sought prior to the AGM.

The STIMBR  
Annual General Meeting  
will  
be held in Wellington on  
8 July, 2008.  
Details to be sent to  
members shortly.

## Background to STIMBR - Stakeholders in Methyl Bromide Reduction

STIMBR was formed to bring together a wide range of organisations and individuals with a common interest in progressing alternative strategies to methyl bromide fumigation for enhancing market access of forest produce while reducing reliance on methyl bromide use.

The forestry sector in particular is seriously exposed to any constraints on methyl bromide use, both locally through the New Zealand Government's efforts to reduce ozone-depleting emissions, and internationally through any move by trading partners to reduce their own methyl bromide use. However, since STIMBR's formation, stakeholder interest has broadened to include a number of smaller users of methyl bromide such as the Fresh Produce Importers Association, BNZ's interest in quarantine treatment of used vehicles, machinery, and sea containers, as well as a number of key fumigation companies.

An aggressive research programme focused on alternative strategies will demonstrate a commitment by all shareholders to reduce reliance on methyl bromide, and recognise the economic and environmental risks of "business as usual".

