

## PESTS and DISEASES in NE Scotland forests - DWP Harvesting say it is time to act



Neil Gordon, DWP Chairman; Dr Stephen Woodward, Aberdeen University; Stewart Towers, ANCF Manager; Joachim Boehm, Forestry Commission; Andrew Nicol, DWP Director and Jamie Farquhar, CONFOR

Chalara fungal disease, first identified in 2006 and now threatening all UK ash trees, is one of the pests and diseases that are increasingly being reported as threatening Scotland's forests. DWP Harvesting recently called a meeting, at their offices in Deeside Activity Park, to address how much of a threat their Members timber resources are under from these new types of invasions.

Dr Stephen Woodward of the School of Biological Sciences at Aberdeen University and Joachim Boehm of Forestry Commission excellent presentations highlighted that this could not and should not be ignored. Dr Woodward explained climate change and the ever increasing international movement of trade and people is making it ever harder for trees to combat infection and for the infections themselves to spread ever more easily.

From a Forestry Commission perspective, Joachim Boehm explained *"The Forestry Commission here in the NE of Scotland is very concerned about the problem of pests and diseases damaging the National Forest Estate timber. Consequently Moray and Aberdeenshire Forest District plans to use approximately 30% of its harvesting operation capacity for the next few years to target infected stands and to minimize the spread of already established pests and disease."*

DWP Harvesting advised their Members that help is at hand from the Forestry Commission's Forest Research Tree Health Diagnostic and Advisory Service. General advice is free and a small charge is made for Disease Diagnosis. Where a Member's timber resources appear to be failing, the first call should be Steve Penny, Research Liaison Officer for Scotland, [steve.penny@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:steve.penny@forestry.gsi.gov.uk), Tel. 0131 445 6989. DWP Members concluded that a good deal more attention to this problem was needed right now. As stated by Andrew Nicol, DWP Director *"Whilst taking reasonable steps to combat the threat of pests and diseases is required for both a felling licence and for certification to certain quality standards, it is expected this aspect of forestry is something that is going to have to be given far greater priority both now and in the future"*.

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