

The value of overseas experience in advancing research for operational improvements

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Dr Paul Adams and Dr Sandra Roberts both undertook Gottstein Fellowships during 2008 – 09, with study tours to the United States of America.



Dr Paul Adams' study tour included attending the North American Forest Soils Conference, a visit to the Forest Nutrition Cooperative (FNC), and visiting a number of forest companies in south-east USA. The experience provided a valuable insight to the region, and the history of land use, forest distribution, development and management on a wide range of soils and environments. It was clearly demonstrated that the local forest managers have a good knowledge and understanding of the link between soil and forest productivity, and other factors that influence tree growth.

This knowledge has been the key to improving productivity, due in large part to the collaborative research that has been undertaken by the FNC. The Cooperative has industry-wide recognition for providing valuable and practical research outcomes on nutrition and productivity in south-east USA. Discussions with three forest companies demonstrated a high degree of operational management and a strong relationship to the staff and students at the FNC.

This study tour provided Dr Adams with a much greater appreciation and understanding of nutrition research practices and management in the region, and has enabled him to update the strategy for advancing management of nutrition and productivity in Forestry Tasmania eucalypt plantations, and to use this to drive new research activities.

Dr Sandra Roberts' role as the forest hydrologist with Forestry Tasmania includes managing hydrology experiments in the Warra LTER, and studies on the impacts of plantations on water quality and evapotranspiration. During Sandra's Gottstein study tour she visited five U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service Experimental Forests, to learn how research into the impacts of forest management on hydrology is undertaken.

Dr Roberts was able to view hydrology experiments, participate in the collection of data, and talk to researchers, field technicians, data managers and students about

their projects and experiences. Sandra attended annual meetings at three of the experimental forests to learn about the range of research activities being undertaken, and also spent four weeks at Oregon State University working on streamflow data from the Warra LTER.

This work was under the instruction of Associate Professor Julia Jones at the Department of Geosciences, Oregon State University. Ten years of streamflow data from Warra were corrected, and basic analyses undertaken. The data will be published, and plans are in place to write a joint paper with Julia Jones and others that will compare the results of long-term forest hydrology studies in North America, South America and Australia.

These two Gottstein Fellowships highlight the value of working with overseas colleagues, and the value of overseas experience. Forestry Tasmania is proud that its scientists were awarded such prestigious opportunities, and recognises the benefits to its research in hydrology, nutrition, productivity and research management more generally.

Both Gottstein reports are available on the internet:
<http://www.gottsteintrust.org>