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JUNE 2023 / ISSUE 27

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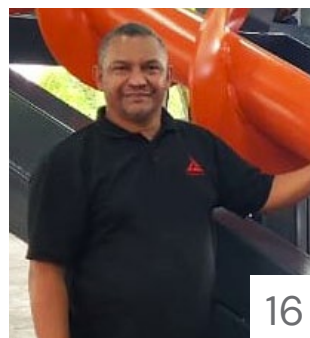
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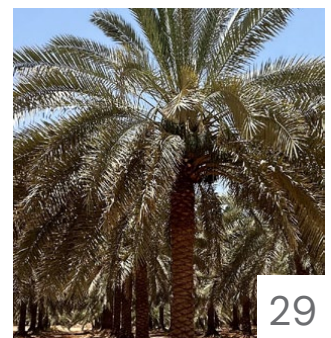
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The value of trade shows

Some people say trade shows are a waste of money, time and effort. But I believe this is short-sighted.

International trade shows provide access to foreign markets and product knowledge. They provide neutral territory where competing exhibitors and visitors mingle and socialise.

In May, I attended the German exhibition, Ligna in Hanover (I did not make it to Interzum in Cologne), and in June, the Malaysian Timber Council (MTC) invited me to the Malaysian Wood Expo (MWE) in Kuala Lumpur. Later in June WoodBiz Africa was an exhibitor at WoodEx for Africa in Johannesburg.

Each show has a unique vibe, dress code and way of doing business. The Ligna experience, for example, is about serious business during the day and social networking at the exhibitors' stands in the evenings.

Interzum is trendy and about furniture and product design functionality and usability, new recyclable materials, haptic surfaces, biophilia and sustainable resources. Ligna's many halls of massive machines are mainly about resource optimisation, process digitalisation, automation and robotic materials handling, multifunctional woodworking machines, biomass, co-generation and new engineered timber building elements.

The German shows are held every two years in May and organised back to back so visitors can attend Interzum before travelling to Ligna.

Without fail, they attract tens of thousands of visitors.

The smaller MWE is also biennial, and although this year was only its second iteration, millions of US dollars were spent on machines by local manufacturers and lumber and components by foreign buyers. WoodEx Africa is an annual show. This year it attracted several exhibitors from Turkey, China, and two from Russia.

Apart from scale, I found the most significant difference between WoodEx and the overseas shows is how industry associations, government agencies and the organisers collaborate. Their participation in co-organising aspects of the trade fairs creates energetic platforms for marketing, trade, education and innovation.

Ligna's Stage and MWE's Pocket Talks were major drawcards made possible through industry associations and government departments facilitating presentations on various informative and relevant topics. The focus on knowledge sharing builds business and social networks attracting new people to the sector and enabling firms to grow and expand internationally.



Joy Crane

Editor – joy@woodbizafrica.co.za

EDITOR

Joy Crane

T: 082 330 0777

E: joy@woodbizafrica.co.za

MARKETING & ADVERTISING

Mickey Petersen

T: 082 321 0371

E: mickey@woodbizafrica.co.za

DESIGN & LAYOUT

Craig Patterson

E: craigpmd@gmail.com

SOCIAL MEDIA

Jamie Cupido

E: jay@koebanimedia.co.za

ACCOUNTS

Bronwyn Hayes

E: bronwyn@fevertreemedia.co.za

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7 Newmark Street,
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Sales Director: Mickey Petersen

Content Director: Joy Crane

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Skogger with felling head provides an ideal solution for Umvuni Solutions

When a well-established timber harvesting contractor in the Mpumalanga Lowveld wanted to speed up infield bunching and presentation of felled timber, his solution was a "featherweight" machine taking on a "heavyweight" skidder.



The nimble Bell Skogger punches above its weight.

John Roux founded Umvuni Solutions at his family's farm in the Low's Creek area in 2012. 'Umvuni' is the Zulu word for 'harvester', and this is what this company does, harvesting timber in a radius of 140km from its base.

FAMILY MATTERS

"My dad has us all involved, me on the operational side and my sisters Ronél, Esmé, and Lindi on finance, data capturing, and safety, respectively," says Ian Roux, John's son. "Our farm is

called Three Sisters and has been in the Roux family since 1931."

Ian is proud of his father's achievements spanning many years in the timber-growing areas of Mpumalanga and Eswatini. He says John built roads in forests for large timber growers and paper producers and converted timber hauling and handling equipment.

BELL IN OUR CORNER

John has come a long way with Bell Equipment and owned his first Bell

cane loader, with serial number 18, in 1976 in the Mpumalanga Lowveld area. In Eswatini he used a Bell logger to load many Bell articulated T25 timber trucks, which he owned from 1992.

When it came to the most recent innovations that Bell and Matriarch brought to the market, he, as a respected veteran of the timber contracting industry, has the inside track on new equipment. "My dad really loves mechanical equipment, which makes our jobs easier", remarks Ian.



From the left are Bell Equipment sales representative Daniel van Huyssteen, Umvuni Solutions senior supervisor Zenzo Mabhena and Umvuni general manager Ian Roux.

NEED FOR SPEED

Umvuni Solutions, as a harvesting company, runs a fleet of machines comprising skidders, excavators with timber processing heads, shovel yarders, and timber handling loggers. With pressure mounting for increased production, the company needed a machine to bunch and present the hand-felled timber quicker than a grapple skidder.

Ian explains that for safety reasons in the compartment, their chainsaw gangs fell trees a day before the extraction and processing teams.

"Although powerful, we found that the skidders were in certain cases too slow in bunching and presenting the felled whole tree lengths for processing", Ian explains.

"We needed an agile machine to extract, bunch, and present the tree lengths quicker. The Bell Skogger was the perfect fit". Umvuni

Solutions took delivery of its first Bell Skogger in November 2021 and it immediately impacted production.

NIMBLE MULTI-TASKER

"The Skogger is far nimbler and manoeuvrable than a skidder, although the latter is more powerful," he says. "It has a tight turning circle and grab on the boom, letting the operator quickly pick up felled tree lengths, bunch and drag them to where the skidder can take them to the roadside for processing".

John and Ian say they were surprised to discover another feature of the Skogger that they were not aware of when planning to buy the machine. They heard they could fit a custom-made felling head to the Bell Skogger, in this case, the MT50FH, like that on the Bell Fastfell.

"We bought the felling head in January 2022 and found that while it

needed two additional hydraulic pipes, it was essentially a 'plug & play' system that took less than three hours to swap out with the machine's grab", Ian explains.

SAFETY INFIELD

"Safety in the compartment is a huge factor for us and our clients, and we have safety officers at every step of the harvesting and production cycles. The felling head on the Skogger now enhances this safety as it easily replaces five chainsaw operators in certain compartments, depending on the gradient and terrain".

Ian says the Skogger can "place a tree better and safer after it has been felled, which makes for more order in a compartment". He explains that chainsaw felling is preferred in rocky areas because the operator can move between the rocks to get to the tree. However, this is the case in less than 25% of the areas where they harvest.

SKOGGER SOLUTIONS

Ian says at first glance, it's plain to see that the Bell Skogger is a purpose-built quiet-running quality forestry machine. "We and our clients are impressed with its safety features, like the fully enclosed and air-conditioned cab that protects the operator and reduces fatigue".

The Skogger does not need to be transported on a low-bed truck, but can be driven to different compartments. It can also work comfortably on moderately steep slopes.

When it comes to fuel consumption, the Roux's compare the Skogger with their three-wheeled loggers using eight litres an hour. The Skogger's

fuel consumption of between nine and ten litres an hour and larger payload is impressive.

The increased productivity prompted the decision to buy another machine. In August 2022 Umvuni celebrated the arrival of their second complete with grab and MT50FH felling head.

BELL DELIVERS

"Thanks to excellent advice from Bell Equipment's knowledgeable sales representative, Daniel van Huyssteen, himself a qualified forester, we have achieved what we set out to do. The workflow of our skidders has increased, and the Skogger "featherweight" is a boxer showing up

the "heavyweight" skidder" says Ian. "We debated where to draw operators from and settled on two men who had been logger operators as they were used to operating grabs in front of them instead of skidders, which load at the rear. We also trained a third operator who had been a chainsaw operator, as backup".

"Acquiring the Bell Skoggers has come with a massive boost in that we now have two dual-purpose machines with their grabs and felling heads. We have one operating as a feller and the other doing extraction, which reduces the number of people in the compartment leading to quicker and safer production. 🍷

NEWS

#WorldsOfDesire PG Bison 1.618 competition in full swing

Third-year architecture and interior design students are working hard on their entries for #WorldsOfDesire, PG Bison's annual 1.618 Education Initiative competition.

The 2023 brief asks entrants to imagine and design a luxury desert oasis for a wealthy content creator who wants to create a space in the heart of the arid Tankwa Karoo to rent out to film and photography crews and other social media content creators.

Students interpreting the brief need to meet various criteria in their submissions, including using the existing building on the site as an anchor point and PG Bison products within appropriate internal spaces. It must invoke the elements of earth, fire, air and water while catering to the basic human needs of eating, sleeping, bathing and socialising.



The winning student and their lecturer will each win a cash prize of R50,000, while the runner-up takes home R25,000, and the third place

wins R10,000. Those who do not place in the top three enjoy a cash prize of R2,000. 🍷
More info: www.1sixoneeight.co.za.

Furntech's learning programmes for educators strengthen Liberia's vocational training system

Liberia's Youth Rising project, supported by the European Union and Sweden, and implemented by the UN Industrial Development Organization (Unido), is reviving the country's technical vocation and education training sector by appointing internationally experienced organisations like South Africa's Furniture Technology Centre (Furntech) to develop Liberia's corps of TVET educators.

The Liberian TVET sector severely lacks quality and relevance, access and equity, funding, and corporate governance. The Liberian government recognised that the transition towards inclusive growth will not happen unless human capacities are enhanced, and the quality of education and vocational training is improved to match the demands of the Labour market.

At the same time, Liberia is actively seeking alternatives to traditional forest logging. It is exploring more durable and sustainable wood sources like rubber (*Hevea Brasiliensis*) plantations where the trees are primarily cultivated for their latex. However, rubber wood is also ideal for carpentry.

Decades of war and economic stagnation have left many carpenters and woodworkers without access to modern techniques or equipment.

"The carpentry industry has enormous potential to provide jobs and improve livelihoods in Liberia," says the Minister of Youth and Sports, Zeogar Wilson. "By reviving these schools, we can ensure that young Liberians have the skills they need to succeed in the industry and contribute to the sustainable development of our country."

YOUTH RISING PROJECT

The government reached out to funders in the EU. The programme was approved and implemented through two Unido projects, *Youth Rising* and



Learning spray painting in Furntech's spray booth.

Promoting Youth Employment, funded by the EU and Sweden in partnership with Liberia's Ministries of Education and Youth & Sports.

The project aims to enable Liberian youth to respond to economic growth opportunities by increasing their employability and entrepreneurship potential through strengthening the TVET colleges. It includes supporting capacity development at central government and TVET provider levels

and strengthening links with the private sector.

FURNTECH

In November 2021, UNIDO appointed Furntech as the provider, and the educators arrived in Cape Town in January 2022.

Furntech is South Africa's Centre of Excellence for the woodworking sector. It has seven skills and small business incubation centres in the



Meette Diazee enjoyed learning how to do upholstery.



The TVET educators used woodworking machines and cabinet making hand and power tools.

country offering Fibre Processing and Manufacturing Sector Education and Training Authority (FP&MSeta) accredited skills development programmes.

Michael Reddy, Furntech's CEO, says the organisation's model of integrating technical and business skills helps young people develop rewarding careers in the furniture, joinery, kitchen manufacturing, shopfitting and wood products industries.

Twelve educators, including two women, were selected from TVET colleges in seven counties:

- Josiah Gaynor
- Meette Ajouh Diazee
- Kla-Wodo Bobby Toomey
- Esther Gheh Isatta Javillie
- Brooks Gbalea
- Debbah Surprise Myers
- Telewoda Kokulo
- George Hne Appleton
- Abraham Sirleaf Beyan
- Matthew Fonneh Fallah
- Emmanuel King Goffa
- Ezekiel Marsah Borbor

They spent 15 months studying and successfully completing the registered qualification, 49091 National Certificate in Furniture Making: Cabinet Making and Wood Machining at NQF Level 2, with rubber wood as their main raw material.

LEARNING PROGRAMMES

"The group arrived with a clear focus on learning as much as possible. Their dedication to their profession and eagerness to take on challenges was inspiring", remarks legshaan Ariefdien, Furntech's chief operating officer based in Cape Town.

"We supplemented their technical training with visits to local furniture manufacturers, and they worked closely with the small businesses in our incubation programme", he says.

"Their hunger for knowledge and skills let us extend their learning by including skills programmes in wood machining and cabinet making at NQF level 3, and wood finishing and upholstery at NQF level 2. They also completed Train the Trainer and business skills courses".



The 12 TVET educators arrive in Liberia after their 15 months at Furntech in Cape Town.

While the educators were away, their college workshops were renovated. On their return, they participated in installing and commissioning new machinery and equipment.

TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCE

Meetee Diazee says Furntech's training was "transformative".

"The opportunity to learn new techniques and gain a recognised qualification in woodworking was a life-changing experience. Before I went to South Africa, I knew wood comes from trees. I did not think that one day I would be able to use machines and tools and make things out of wood and upholster furniture," she comments.

"We are all excited and looking forward to sharing our knowledge with the students and helping them develop the skills they need to succeed in the industry. Thank you, Furntech and all the organisations and government departments that made this possible". 🌳



They completed a range of projects including veneered chess boards, cabinets, tables and chairs.

FOCUS ON FORESTRY 2023

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Komatsu is investing in electrifying forest machines

Komatsu Forest believes sustainability is fundamental to its business and is investing in the future by building a new development department focusing on electrifying forest machines.



The company wants to take the lead in the forest machinery industry and help reduce net carbon dioxide emissions from its forest machines.

"We have a production facility close to carbon neutral and are working with the same goal-awareness to reduce CO₂- emissions from our forest machines. The vision is to reach a "net zero emission worksite", says Erik Nilsson, CTO at Komatsu Forest.

"We see an increasing interest in our customers and partners in reducing the environmental impact of forest machines. We aim to reduce

CO₂- emissions from our products by 50% by 2030 and expect to have something on the market before then," says Peter Hasselryd, VP of marketing & sales.

The initiative is a groundbreaking technology step for Komatsu Forest and poses significant challenges. Forest machines work off-grid, and there are many aspects to consider when developing new machine solutions. For the machines to use different types of energy media, energy distribution solutions are needed for the workplace in the forest. "We are happy to lead the way, but

cooperation and partnership are an important part of the transition in the forest", says Nilsson. "It needs new technologies and system solutions to let our customers use renewable energy sources if required".

"We are looking for electric vehicle developers, hardware and software developers, computational engineers, and application engineers in energy, hydraulics and mechanics. We also need new competencies in vehicle certification and testing, all with a genuine interest in developing products and solutions for a sustainable future", says Nilsson. 🌱

Some teak supply chains show integrity risks

The findings of the first phase of the transaction verification (TV) loop on Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified teak indicate a high possibility of integrity risks in the certified teak supply chains.

MTT is an engineered timber manufacturer specialising in manufacturing and supplying large-scale, complex components for construction applications. It is part of the Sustainabuild Group.

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), in collaboration with Assurance Services International (ASI), launched a TV loop on FSC-certified teak in June 2022. The analysis of transaction data submitted by the certificate holders included in the scope of the TV loop shows that non-certified timber may be entering the teak supply chains.

Last year, ASI collected transaction data from January to December 2021 from 511 certificate holders with teak (*Tectona grandis*) in their certification scope. The TV loop traces the entire supply chain, from timber harvested by certified forest management units (FMUs) to the final products sold to consumers, such as flooring, veneer and outdoor furniture.

KEY FINDINGS OF THE DATA ANALYSIS INCLUDE:

A mapping exercise of the flow of teak from the forest to the consumer shows:

- Most certified forest management units (FMUs) harvesting and selling teak are in Latin America and Indonesia.
- The processing certificate holders are in Vietnam, China, Costa Rica and Indonesia.
- European countries like Denmark, Germany, and Italy are the main buyers of the finished products considered in the scope of this TV loop, namely outdoor furniture, planks and wood for construction.
- There are no FSC-certified FMUs

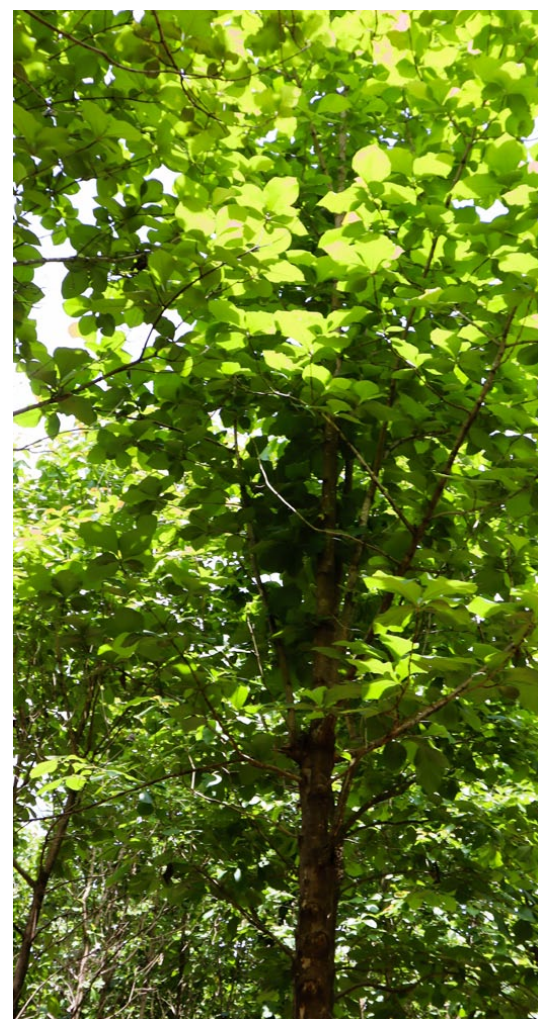
selling teak from Myanmar, and none of the certificate holders within the scope of this TV loop reported any purchases of teak from Myanmar.

Some of the potential integrity risks identified at this stage include:

- Only about half of the FMUs participating in this TV loop declared their sales. Other FMUs in Latin America, Asia Pacific, and Africa declared no certified teak sales for the evaluated year. The preliminary results of the TV loop show that the volume of teak purchased by the chain of custody certificate holders is greater than the volume of teak sold by FMUs. This potential volume mismatch poses an integrity risk to FSC's certified supply chain of teak.
- Several supply chains ending in Europe could not be traced back to the original forest from which the timber was sourced. Besides, certificate holders who do not have teak in their certificate scope have reportedly made transactions involving this species.

FSC is concerned with the preliminary findings of this TV loop and is working to obtain more information and proof of actual violations of FSC requirements.

ASI will further investigate the potential volume mismatch that has been identified along with other high-risk supply chains as part of the second phase of this TV loop. Certificate holders are recommended to apply additional due diligence in selecting their teak suppliers and following FSC rules to ensure that the teak products they purchase



are legitimate and within the FSC certificate scope of the seller.

FSC's normative framework (Advice Note 18) provides actions that FSC can take against companies making false claims. The identified false claims can result in FSC blocking the company from the FSC system for a specific duration. A blocked company can no longer make FSC claims on their products, nor can they use the FSC trademark. Throughout the blockage, they are not eligible to seek FSC certification. 🚫

MWE 2023 business matching missions net over USD32 million in sales

While visitors at the Malaysian Wood Expo (MWE 2023) networked with industry organisations, exhibitors and each other, the Malaysian Timber Council (MTC) and the Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (Matrade) were behind the scenes matching 88 Malaysian exporters of wood-based products with foreign buyers from 23 countries resulting in business worth an impressive export value of USD32 million.

By Joy Crane



The Malaysian Wood Expo 2023 was well attended.

The 773 business meetings were held at the Malaysian Wood Expo (MWE) 2023, organised by MTC on 18 – 20 June 2023 at the Malaysia International Trade and Exhibition Centre (MITEC). Foreign buyers flew in from Bahrain, Canada, Chile, China, France, Hungary, India, Ireland, Japan, Jordan, Maldives, Mexico, Nepal, Pakistan, Poland, Qatar, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Türkiye, UAE, UK and USA.

The items sourced by the foreign buyers were plywood, medium density fibreboard (MDF), veneer, wooden doors, wooden flooring, and furniture products.

POCKET TALKS

Pocket Talks were a magnet at MWE. Sixteen 45min sessions were held

featuring experts speaking on a range of relevant topics, including:

- Unveiling the US market: key insights for producer countries.
- Forced labour and sustainability reporting requirements in global trade.
- Future-proofing your business by setting up a solid ESG framework.
- Certified wood: Where can we go from here?
- What is palm wood, and why do we need it?
- Timber verification services for timber in construction.
- Timber engineering in the 21st century.

INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

The success and prestige of MWE 2023 can be attributed to the

coordination actions of the small team of professional, dedicated and energetic people at MTC working for and, most notably with, the country's forestry and wood processing industries and other government agencies.

MTC was formed as an initiative of the timber industry in January 1992 to promote the development and growth of the Malaysian timber industry. It is governed by a Board of Trustees, whose members are appointed by the Minister of Plantation Industries and Commodities.

Despite board member changes when new government leaders are ushered in, the vital core of MTC staff remains focused on ensuring the timber industry's sustainability by improving its competitiveness,



There were 773 business meetings during MWE 2023.

enhancing market access and creating trade opportunities.

INTERNATIONAL FOCUS

MTC's CEO Noraihan Abdul Rahman is a seasoned visitor to all regions of Africa. She confided that she always looks forward to visiting South Africa and loves the atmosphere and food unique to the Bokaap area of Cape Town.

"Our three regional offices monitor markets on the ground on every continent while the local team serves the industry by providing market information, organising marketing,

technology and raw material sourcing events and targeted communication efforts", says Rahman.

Marketing missions are also a priority. These are used to gather information, network and expose small businesses to the latest market trends and technologies.

Lau Li Har, director of MTC's Strategic Planning and Corporate Communications Division, told WoodBiz Africa that MTC tries to keep abreast of all factors impacting the growth and development of wood product manufacturers and their markets.

EXPANDING MARKETS

Echoing the challenges of changing the African building and construction sector's dependence on bricks and concrete, Li Har says, "We are increasingly engaging with architects, structural engineers and interior designers to grow their understanding of the advantages of incorporating timber into their designs".

MTC recently revamped its offices to present a hands-on hi-tech showroom with samples of timber products manufactured from wood sourced from Malaysia's sustainably managed forests.

"While we work with organisations like the Malaysian Timber Certification Scheme, and international certification agencies, we have extended our scope to include facilitating the sourcing of sufficient quality and quantity of raw materials for manufacturers and the export market", explains Li Har.

INDUSTRY 4.0

She says the rapid development and increasing use of sensors and artificial intelligence in manufacturing is changing industrial manufacturing. "Technology is a concern. It is constantly changing, and there is a national shortage of skilled labour. Margins are tight for manufacturers.

"We provide productivity enhancing assistance to the industry through our Factory Transformation Programme focusing on Industry 4.0, and our Automation and Digitalisation, Engineer Placement, Internship in Industry and the Timber Reality and Timber Design Incubator Programmes".

MTC's website is user friendly and geared to inform Malaysia's manufacturers and potential buyers about industry trends. It is updated monthly with the latest trade statistics by product and region, technical information, forestry, and sustainability information. The organisation also offers marketing courses on advanced photography and editing, digital marketing and basic graphic design. 🌿

Ed's comment: Thank you, MTC, for hosting me at MWE 2023 and the fascinating tours that followed.



YB Datuk Hajah Siti Aminah Aching, the Malaysian Deputy Minister of Plantation and Commodities learns more about CNC machines after opening the Malaysian Wood Expo 2023.

The king of forwarders rules harvesting operations

Ponsse's southern African distributor and service partner, MTS in Mbombela, Mpumalanga, recently delivered two brand new Ponsse Elephant King forwarders to a customer for clearfell operations.

Chris Odendaal, the owner of MTS, says the Ponsse's Elephant King forwarder is the most powerful machine in its forwarder range. "It is the most productive on the market. It is particularly economical and efficient transporting large trees and over long distances", states Chris.

Elephant King's technology, tested in extreme cold and heat conditions, including Brazil, improves productivity and helps the operator keep going. The cabin offers an enjoyable work environment for professionals who appreciate comfort, safety, and ergonomics. The powerful engine and 20-tonne load-carrying capacity guarantee that trees are transported efficiently.

ACTIVE CRANE

When Elephant King is equipped with the Ponsse Active Crane loader control system for forwarders, productivity in demanding conditions is further improved.

With the Active Crane system, the operator controls grapple movements instead of individual functions, lightening the operator's workload. The Active Crane is easily controlled using two levers, one for grapple height from the ground and the other for movement direction.

K121 LOADER

The Elephant King forwarder with the K121 loader is the most potent combination at worksites where load handling takes up a large part of working hours. Chris says the Ponsse K121 loader offers "unprecedented efficiency and speed for load handling in tough conditions".



The Elephant King in action in a cut-to-length clearfelling operation.



Chris Odendaal of MTS.

Over the past years, Ponsse has invested heavily in its R&D and production capabilities. The 19000th Ponsse machine rolled off the line at the company's new eco- and ergonomically friendly factory earlier this year.



The Ponsse Elephant King with Active Crane is a formidable forwarder

The K121 loader also makes working easier at sites where large trees are handled and on steep slopes where the loader needs to be powerful. The high slewing and lifting power, longer reach, new loader geometry, and good controllability speed up loading and unloading.

CUT-TO-LENGTH

Ponsse forest machines are based on environmentally friendly cut-to-length (CTL) logging, where trees are felled, delimbed and cut into various log assortments before they leave the forest. The product range covers all size categories, from first thinning and harvesting forest biomass for energy to heavy-duty regeneration felling, specially adapted for all logging sites, from soft soil to steep slopes.

Ponsse's machines operate in 40 countries, and the family-owned business employs more than 1800 people worldwide. All Ponsse machines and critical components are designed and built in the company's modern factory in Vieremä, Finland.

Continuous investment and development have been Ponsse's

cornerstones since the 1970s. Over the past few years, Ponsse has invested heavily in its R&D and production capabilities. The 19000th Ponsse machine rolled off the line at the company's new eco- and ergonomically friendly factory earlier this year.

Thanks to the investment, testing and quality control have increased considerably. For example, the factory now features a state-of-the-art optical 3D scanning unit to inspect all forest machine structures to ensure they meet the quality requirements.

MTS FIELD SERVICE

MTS Parts' field service aims to ensure maximum uptime and customer productivity. "We have been building our business around transparency, reliability and integrity, which has seen us garner customer respect, trust and loyalty. We strive to bolster this reputation by continuing to offer unprecedented products, services and solutions", says Chris.

MTS offers a field service staffed by highly trained and skilled technicians to maximise convenience and minimise downtime for customers.

MTS Parts' vision and goals align with Ponsse's values and goals, enabling us to assist harvesting companies to achieve better profitability and efficiency", says Juha Vidgrén, who chairs Ponsse's board of directors.

PARTS, BACKUP AND SUPPORT

MTS holds various parts in stock and offers an export service for parts and components. The MTS workshop is fully equipped to perform minor and major repairs and maintenance to all bulk handling machinery and hydraulic cylinders. In addition, they rebuild hydraulic components, engines, transmissions and other industry-specific machines.

The workshop includes a general engineering facility which enables the MTS team to manufacture components when necessary. 📞

Contact Chris Odendaal at 082-5757447 or chris@mtsparts.co.za for a quote for new Ponsse equipment or parts.

John Barnardo is Pinnacle-SA's one-man-army

Combining traditional craftsmanship with cutting-edge engineering, Pinnacle-SA consistently develops innovative sawmilling machinery and automation solutions that streamlines timber production while minimising waste and maximising output.

From large-scale industrial sawmills to smaller operations, its diverse range of machinery caters to the unique requirements of each customer and their journey to improved competitiveness.

Pinnacle-SA's Neil Murray says the company's success is based on the technical knowledge and expertise of the design and manufacturing team and its manager, John Barnardo.

Born and raised in Plettenberg Bay, South Africa, John spent his school days helping his dad with welding projects. To this day, he loves two things: working with his hands and steel. So, the decision to study boiler making at Mossel Bay technical college was the obvious choice for tertiary education.

At the age of 19, John joined the team at Multisaw Sawmilling (now Pinnacle-SA) under the guidance of Neil. Twenty eight years later, John is a shareholder at Pinnacle-SA and the design and production manager of the business.

Introduced to 2D Autocad at college, John realised its limitations for his innovative mind and delved into the complexities of 3D-design-CAD programming, teaching himself advanced design to manipulate the development of each machine before building.

John is a man of many talents. He is equally at home discussing sawmill layouts with customers and designing, building and delivering the project, be it a single machine or a complete green-fields sawing line. This has earned him the nickname "John – the one-man army".

Having the opportunity to live and expand his dream is key to John's life purpose. He says this is why he continues to give his knowledge, effort and dedication to Pinnacle-SA. He is acknowledged and greatly respected by the Pinnacle-SA team.

Last year, John was tasked with developing a Quadband saw for a local client, a "reasonably straightforward" project considering his involvement in Pinnacle-SA's Twinband builds.

"Just add two heads" – an easier-said-than-done scenario – became a more challenging project as development progressed. The kind of challenge John Barnardo thrives on to deliver a successful outcome. 🍷



John Barnardo in his young days feeding a Multisaw resaw.



Lara le Roux and John Barnardo are shareholders in Pinnacle SA.



John Barnardo at the USNR stand at Ligna 2023.

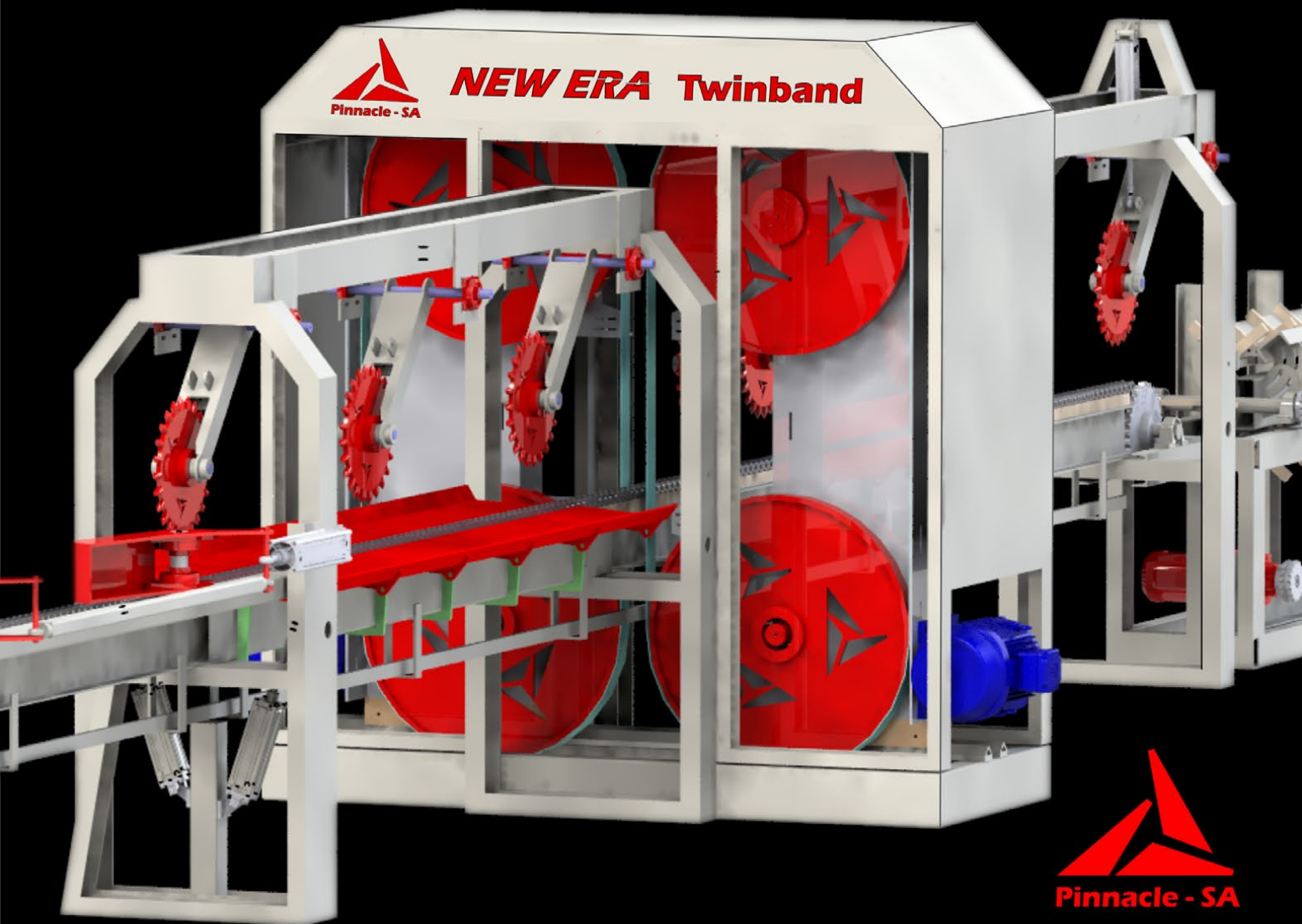
Pinnacle-SA's Neil Murray says the company's success is based on the technical knowledge and expertise of the design and manufacturing team and its manager, John Barnardo.



The Pinnacle-SA screw conveyor designed and manufactured by John Barnardo with Luke Murray of Sawmill Solutions USA.



www.pinnacle-sa.com



SAWPA's legal action against the DFFE delays regulations incorrectly stating that CCA is banned

Bruce Breedt, the chief executive of the South African Wood Preservers Association (SAWPA), reports that the organisation has delayed South African regulations that falsely label CCA a banned substance and that trade in the wood preservative is prohibited.

On 21 February 2023, the Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment (DFFE) published the document, *Regulations to domesticate the requirements of the Rotterdam Convention on the prior informed consent procedure for certain hazardous chemicals and pesticides in international trade*.

The objective was for the DFFE to implement the requirements of the Rotterdam Convention, a global treaty between 165 nations that provides early warning to countries about a broad range of hazardous chemicals that are traded internationally. It is closely related to regulations implementing the Globally Harmonised System (GHS) governing the classification of chemicals.

In Annexure 1B, the DFFE lists CCA as "no longer registered", and that trade and use of the chemical are "no longer allowed". Both statements are incorrect.

Under the GHS regulations, using CCA-treated and creosote-treated timber could be phased out. It regards CCA-treated wood as toxic. SAWPA says this, too, is an incorrect classification.

SAWPA reported the errors in the regulations and Annexure 1B. The list includes arsenic compounds (including formulations used in CCA wood preservatives) with incorrect context stating that no current formulations are registered for any uses in South Africa. It implies that arsenic in all forms and uses is banned.

However, the department published the regulations despite the wood preservation industry's numerous written interactions and submissions on the technically and legally incorrect information in 2021/22. SAWPA again approached the DFFE requesting written acknowledgement of the errors and an undertaking that the regulations would be withdrawn and corrected to prevent potential damage to the industry.

In the meantime, Dolphin Bay, one of three local manufacturers of wood preservatives, consulted its lawyers when the regulations were published. The legal counsel assisted SAWPA and the three CCA producer members in lodging an urgent application to the North Gauteng High Court to interdict the DFFE from implementing the new regulations.

Before the scheduled hearing, the DFFE's lawyers requested that the urgent application to the High Court be withdrawn. SAWPA and its lawyers agreed to postpone the court application so that meaningful progress in the discussions was made within a month. The industry will permanently withdraw the court application if such progress is made; otherwise, the application shall be lodged again.

The postponement was gazetted on 6 June 2023, delaying the implementation date of the PIC regulations for 180 days. Although it's not a withdrawal of the incorrect regulations, the DFFE assures SAWPA that it will work directly with the industry to address the problems.

SAWPA must remain optimistic that the future will hold positives for the timber industry. However, this will only happen when negative impacts causing the current poor economic outlook are addressed, and the policy strategies in the Forestry Sector Masterplan are achieved.

According to the *Dolphin Bay Brief*, the company asked highly respected scientists at Infotox to investigate whether CCA-treated timber is toxic. The scientists concluded that CCA-treated timber falls well within the safety limits prescribed by the GHS.

"In their report, the scientists also addressed the misconception that CCA was banned in the US and Europe. In both areas, the use of CCA was limited voluntarily under the 'precautionary principle'. CCA-treated timber is still commonly used in these countries".

Breedt says as an industry representative body, SAWPA must remain optimistic that the future will hold positives for the timber industry. "However, this will only happen if and when negative impacts causing the current poor economic outlook are addressed, and the policy strategies contained in the Forestry Sector Masterplan are achieved". 🙌

Sources: Bruce Breedt, SAWPA Newsletter and The Dolphin Bay Brief.

The Sappi Chair in Climate Change and Plantation Sustainability launched at Wits

Sappi Southern Africa and the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) announced the launch of the Sappi Chair in Climate Change and Plantation Sustainability headed by Prof Mary Scholes.

Scholes is an internationally recognised authority on tree physiology and climate change. She will identify critical research needs through the research chair, and develop research outputs related to climate change, one of the university's eight research priorities.

The intervention will develop the capacity to manipulate and interpret climate modelling data. It will also focus on developing and mentoring young and upcoming academics and researchers through funding for one post-doctoral fellow and bursaries for a Masters and Honours student.

Tracy Wessels, Sappi group head of sustainability and investor relations, commented, "The creation of the Research Chair demonstrates Sappi's commitment to building a thriving world through strong partnerships, supporting innovation and investing in future research capabilities.

"Like all other crops, the trees in the 399,996 hectares of land we own and lease are negatively impacted by climate change. While we practise climate-smart forestry and our research teams are developing drought-resistant genotypes, the temperatures over the South African interior are projected to rise at about one and a half to double the global rate of temperature increase.

"There is increasing global pressure to account accurately for greenhouse gas emissions from forests, land and agriculture. Against this backdrop and in line with our commitment to UN SDG13: Climate Action, the need to develop climate solutions has intensified, which is why our sponsorship of this initiative makes sound business sense".

Wits' work will help enhance Sappi's planning process and overall competitiveness. "Because forestry is a long-term crop, the industry needs to know well in advance where to direct their resources and investment and needs the most accurate climate models to rely on", says Scholes.

Sappi's sponsorship of the Research Chair will take place over three years, beginning in 2023. Scholes turned 65 in 2022, and the chair extended her career, keeping her valuable expertise and experience within the university.

"This is a commitment from one industry to keep current expertise and experience within the higher education sector while developing new capacity in a research area that is critical for not just the forestry industry in South Africa but the country as a whole", says Scholes. 🌱



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Wood-Mizer's three stands made an impact at Ligna

Wood-Mizer's three stands at the Ligna 2023 trade show in Germany presented various new solutions and machines for turning logs into finished products profitably.



Wood-Mizer demonstrated two log processing lines.

The company demonstrated two industrial sawmilling lines for log processing. The lines consisted of saws joined in a synchronous operating system by material conveyors that sort and transport lumber, slabs, trimmings, and sawdust for further processing. It allows for the use of 100% of raw materials.

FIRST LINE

The first line was based on Wood-Mizer's flagship WB2000 industrial sawmill, featuring a hydraulic log loading deck, and an integrated automatic board removal conveyor. The industrial two-operator MR200

double-arbour multi-rip saw was on show for the first time. The line can cut large logs up to 92cm in diameter with 50–75mm wide bandsaw blades.

The WB2000 has a newly designed cabin, where an operator using joysticks at a control panel, can comfortably control the line functions, from log loading to positioning material on the sawmill bed, sawing, and removing finished boards. The machine has a built-in debarker, which extends the blade life.

SECOND LINE

Wood-Mizer's second industrial line processed logs into pallet boards. It consisted of a heavy-duty twin

vertical saw, a log loading ramp and sorting equipment, the HR700 horizontal double-head band resaw, and the EG800 edger for slab processing.

BOARD EDGERS

Wood-Mizer presented a range of board edgers differing in power, performance, maximum board dimensions, and price for different scales of operation.

The compact EG100 edger, with an electric 7kW or petrol 14HP motor and two 250mm diameter circular saws, is an excellent companion for portable sawmills. The popular Wood-Mizer EG300 edger/multi-rip has a

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Wood-Mizer introduced its electric battery saw at Ligna.

15kW or 18.5kW electric motor and a free-standing control panel with electronic networks. It can have two to five circular saws with a diameter of 350mm.

WOOD-MIZER SYSTEMS

At a separate booth, Wood-Mizer presented its newly formed division, Wood-Mizer Systems. It specialises in designing and manufacturing custom-made industrial sawmill lines.

Industrial versions of edgers and multi-rips were shown in action, including an EG800 edger with a 30kW to 55kW motor and four 400mm circular saws and an MR200 double arbour Multi-rip with motors from 2x15kW to 2x30kW and up to 12 circular blades on each shaft capable of sawing timber up to 200mm thick.

THE WIDE RANGE

The availability of massive logs, which are difficult to transport and cut, but easy and inexpensive to purchase, prompted Wood-Mizer to provide its customers with the option of a Wide saw head. The LT15Wide, LT20Wide, LT40Wide, and LT70Wide machines presented at LIGNA can saw logs 90cm to 105cm in diameter.

The uniquely designed LX250 extra-wide sawmill offers more options. The wide saw head moves on two rails and cuts logs up to 140cm in diameter. The MB200 SlabMizer has five carbide knives that flatten slabs up to 142cm wide and orbital sanding head attachment.

PORTABLE MILLS

Wood-Mizer introduced two new portable sawmills with wide saw heads, combining the advantages of mobility and processing large logs.

The LT15Classic Wide mobile sawmill is an affordable machine with a segmented bed. The LT20Wide portable sawmill is a more advanced solution as its bed can be equipped with different versions of the hydraulic system for log handling, which is essential when working with heavy logs.

Ligna visitors could compare Wood-Mizer sawmill models in action. For example, the LT15Classic with a low segmented bed, 7.5kW motor, and 32mm blade has manual log loading and positioning. The fastest and most productive sawmill in the LT line, the LT70, has a multi-functional hydraulic system, an 18.5kW main engine, large

600mm diameter blade wheels, and uses a 38mm blade.

All Wood-Mizer sawmills can be equipped with networks, an electronic device for programming the required board thickness and automatically setting the saw head to the proper height. The LT70 features networks as standard.

ELECTRIC BATTERY MILL

Wood-Mizer presented an industry-first LT15Wide machine powered by an electric battery at Ligna. The new power option provides sawmillers with an affordable electric sawmill with replaceable batteries that can be recharged at a charging base.

WOODWORKING

Wood-Mizer's full line of compact woodworking machines was displayed at a third stand. Three new additions were launched, the MP280 four-sided planer/moulder, the MS750 panel saw and the CNC5003 automatic machine.

Wood-Mizer Tools highlighted the full range of bandsaw, circular, and frame saw blades, planer knives and cutters, and blade maintenance equipment. 🪚

Dale Brown appointed CEO of Wood Technologies

Wood Technologies International (Wood Technologies), a comprehensive supplier of modern lumber processing equipment, technology, and essential tooling, has appointed Dale Brown as CEO. Outgoing CEO Craig Tompkins will be a strategic advisor to the board of directors.



Dale Brown.

“We are proud to have Dale step into this role after eight years of leadership at the company”, says Rob Sivitilli, board chairman. “We thank Craig for leading the effective integration efforts after the merger of USNR and Wood Fiber Group and for helping drive two subsequent complementary acquisitions, all of which made Wood Technologies an industry leader today”.

Brown has had a 37-year tenure with Wood Technologies and its predecessor, USNR. “I thank the board for entrusting me as the next leader of Wood Technologies. I look forward to working with our great team whose hard work has contributed to our success”, he says. “Craig has been a first-rate colleague over the last year as we’ve built an industry leader with tremendous potential. I thank him for his efforts and wish him well in retirement”.

SHARP BLADE, SHARP TECHNOLOGY

The STIHL FS 460 C-EM K clearing saw has been designed especially for the tough working conditions of silviculture, with a chisel tooth blade for use as a saw in forestry applications. This is the most technologically advanced clearing saw produced by STIHL, and features the ‘M-Tronic’ fully electronic engine management system, which automatically compensates for variations in altitude, temperature and fuel quality by monitoring and adjusting the fuel-air mix for optimal performance in all conditions. With ErgoStart and simplified starting, a low emission, fuel-efficient 2-MIX engine and a 4-point anti-vibration system, this impressive machine is the perfect choice for forestry professionals.

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Timber in Context: Design a biodiversity skills centre competition

The York Timbers sponsored "Timber in Context" competition challenges designers to explore new structural and ecological possibilities of timber construction and design a Biodiversity Skills Centre to complement the Lapalala Wilderness School.

The site is land donated to the Lapalala Wilderness School by the community of Ga-Rantlakane within the Greater Bakenburg area in the Waterberg district of Limpopo Province in South Africa.

The brief is to design an interactive agricultural and environmental skills training centre. The facility aims to build on local ecological knowledge and biodiversity awareness to

enhance climate change resilient, sustainable subsistence farming and livelihoods that support the local economy.

The primary sponsor is York Timbers, and the lead organisers are the Department of Trade, Industry & Competition (dtic) and the University of Pretoria. The first prize is R30,000, the second is R15,000, and the third is R5,000.

The judging panel are Braam de Villiers, David Krynauw, Christo van der Hoven, Emma Ayesu-Koranteng and Tlholo Sesana.

The deadlines for 2023 are:

- 1 July: Registration
- 3 September: Project submission deadline
- 4 – 11 September: Evaluation
- 12 September: Winner announced at the Timber Construction Conference. 🌲

NEWS

Kenya lifts commercial logging ban

On 2 July, Kenya's President William Ruto ended an almost six-year moratorium on logging in the country's commercial forests, leaving the ban on logging indigenous forests in place.

"We can't have mature trees rotting in forests while locals suffer due to lack of timber. That's foolishness", Ruto commented during a church service. "This is why we have decided to open the forest and harvest timber to create jobs for our youth and open up business".

In 2018, as deputy president, Ruto announced a 90-day ban "to allow reassessment and rationalisation of the entire forest sector". The government regularly extended the ban to limit illegal logging and prevent lowering Kenya's water levels during a

drought. While lifting the ban, Ruto is maintaining Kenya's goal of planting 15 billion trees over the next 10 years. The Kenya Forest Service (KFS) has also set rules for harvesting in gazetted forests, including requiring loggers to acquire entry and exit certificates.

According to a report by *Reason*, an online news magazine, the Kenya Forestry Research Institute says, the 2018 ban led to the loss of about 44,000 jobs and US\$28 million in revenue, bringing economic collapse to communities that relied on the logging industry.

Ruto's decision has set off a storm of environmentalist anger, with activists accusing him of favouring economic development over the country's climate goals.

John Kioli, the executive director of the Green Africa Foundation, told the Associated Press that he didn't

expect the president to achieve his tree-planting goal and that lifting the ban would "undermine all efforts to put Kenya on a low-carbon trajectory".

"By lifting this ban, President Ruto has prioritised profit over people and nature", commented Tracy Makheth of Greenpeace Africa in a press release. "The ban on logging in public and community forests should not be based on monetary value, but rather on restoring our natural forests with indigenous trees".

According to Global Forest Watch, Kenya lost 375,000ha (11%) of its tree cover between 2001 and 2022. Around 50,000ha was primary forest. 🌲

Sources: *William Rampe in Reason 10 July 2023 & Mongabay 14 July 2023*

Understaffed authorities struggle to curb deforestation in Angola

Farmers and loggers in Nambuangongo, Angola's Bengo province, are clearing 800 hectares of forest yearly. Between 2000 and 2020, tree cover declined by 12%, according to Global Forest Watch, and a quarter of that loss was primary rainforest.

Nambuangongo is a 240km drive northwest of Luanda, the Angolan capital. It is a largely forested area of 560,000ha, where most inhabitants rely on the forest for their livelihoods.

The municipal director of agriculture, Sebastião Andrade, says it's difficult to convince local communities that clearing the forest to make way for farms will have harmful consequences. Farmers believe they're using the land as their ancestors did.

"It is an inadvisable practice, taking into account the devastation of the fauna and flora, but, even so, these are the rudimentary methods that families find to increase agricultural production", says Andrade.

Nambuangongo's forests are also under pressure from commercial logging by registered and unlicensed timber companies.

Understaffed and poorly equipped, the municipality's forestry inspectors are not monitoring tree felling or fire damage. António João Lopes oversees

the inspectors. He told Mongabay that citizens cut down trees and use fire to clear new farmland in the forest to sustain themselves. His office is working to explain which tree species should be preserved.

Local authorities are asking for additional support from the provincial department of the Institute for Forestry Development, the agriculture ministry branch coordinating the timber industry. 🌳

Source: *Mongabay 14 July 2023*

Uganda announces ban on timber exports

Blaming indiscriminate harvesting of public and private forests, President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda has revoked all timber export licenses and permits, effectively banning exports of timber from the East African country.

Mongabay reports that environmental activist Eddie Mukiibi supports the decision. He says the country's forest management agency is failing to regulate a growing timber industry.

"The sad reality is that the National Forestry Authority is involved in giving out land in former natural forests for pine and eucalyptus growing for export. The EU-funded Sawlog Production Grant propelled this impact", Mukiibi said.

Mukiibi, the president of Slow Food International and an agroecological farmer, said that while the ban is a start, timber exports are not the leading cause of deforestation in the country.

"President Museveni should also know that the leading cause of deforestation of natural forests in Uganda is the extension of monocultural sugarcane plantations", Mukiibi stated, saying the Mabira and Bugoma forests were not cleared

for timber export. "They have been massively cleared for sugarcane growing and sugar exports. The timber is a byproduct of agribusiness-based deforestation".

From 2002 to 2022, Uganda lost 75,000 hectares of humid primary forest, according to forest monitoring group Global Forest Watch. 🌳

Source: *Mongabay 14 July 2023*

Largest shim manufacturer in North America opts for Wood-Mizer's industrial solutions

Woodworking machine manufacturing specialist Wood-Mizer recently installed a heavy-duty, high recovery, and reduced labour industrial sawmill system at Nelson Wood Shims, the largest shim manufacturer in North America.



The Wood-Mizer heavy-duty TV6000 Twin Vertical saw prepares the cant for the multi-rip saw.

Brian Peterson, president of Nelson Wood Shims, says the Minnesota-based company provides consistently high-quality shims for DIY enthusiasts and construction contractors. With 65 years of manufacturing and marketing experience, their recognisable products are sold through well-known and national home improvement retail stores.

A shim is a wedge-shaped piece of wood used to align and level surfaces or support construction projects. Nelson Wood Shims cuts a variety of

shims from top-quality coniferous wood grown in North America and around the world.

"To uphold the legacy of our founder, Wilbur Nelson, manufacturing dimensionally stable and true shims that meet our customers' needs is very important", explains Peterson.

Plant manager Scott Berg said in 2014, the company decided to invest in technology to help it meet market needs. "Wood-Mizer had an entry-level sawmill that would fit in our current building at the time. Wood-Mizer helped with the learning curve",

he explains. In 2015, Nelson Wood Shims added a Wood-Mizer LT50 Hydraulic saw to their operation to process logs.

"We installed our first sawmill to process our wood and vertically integrate the manufacturing process. Today, Wood-Mizer continues to help us further streamline and increase production without losing our reputation for high quality", explains Peterson.

Nelson Wood Shims continued to grow and soon needed a solution to expand its sawmill capacity. "We were



An operator changing a bandsaw blade of the impressive TV6000 twin vertical breakdown saw.

familiar with Wood-Mizer's support and desire to please their customer", says Berg. "They offered an automated system at an affordable price".

The Wood-Mizer Sawmilling Solutions specialist team designed and installed a new high-throughput commercial processing line to meet the requirements of the sawmill.

Luke Murray of Wood-Mizer says, "The Wood-Mizer range of industrial machines allows us to meet the needs of customers who are experiencing growth or have growth goals. We were thrilled to work with Nelson Wood Shims and install an innovative, heavy-duty sawing system on budget".

The system features a TV6000 twin vertical saw and MR6000 multi-rip gang saw incorporating innovative system controls allowing one operator to process the logs to lumber at reduced labour costs. With the integrated material handling components, lumber moves through the system efficiently for sorting and stacking.

The TV6000 Twin Vertical saw is Wood-Mizer's largest and most robust primary breakdown machine, handling a high throughput of small to medium diameter logs up to 6.6m in length.

"The main priority at this primary stage in the log breakdown process is to achieve equal open faces on the sawn cant," says Murray. "Our twin bands achieve equal open face cutting using a fast, accurate log feed system

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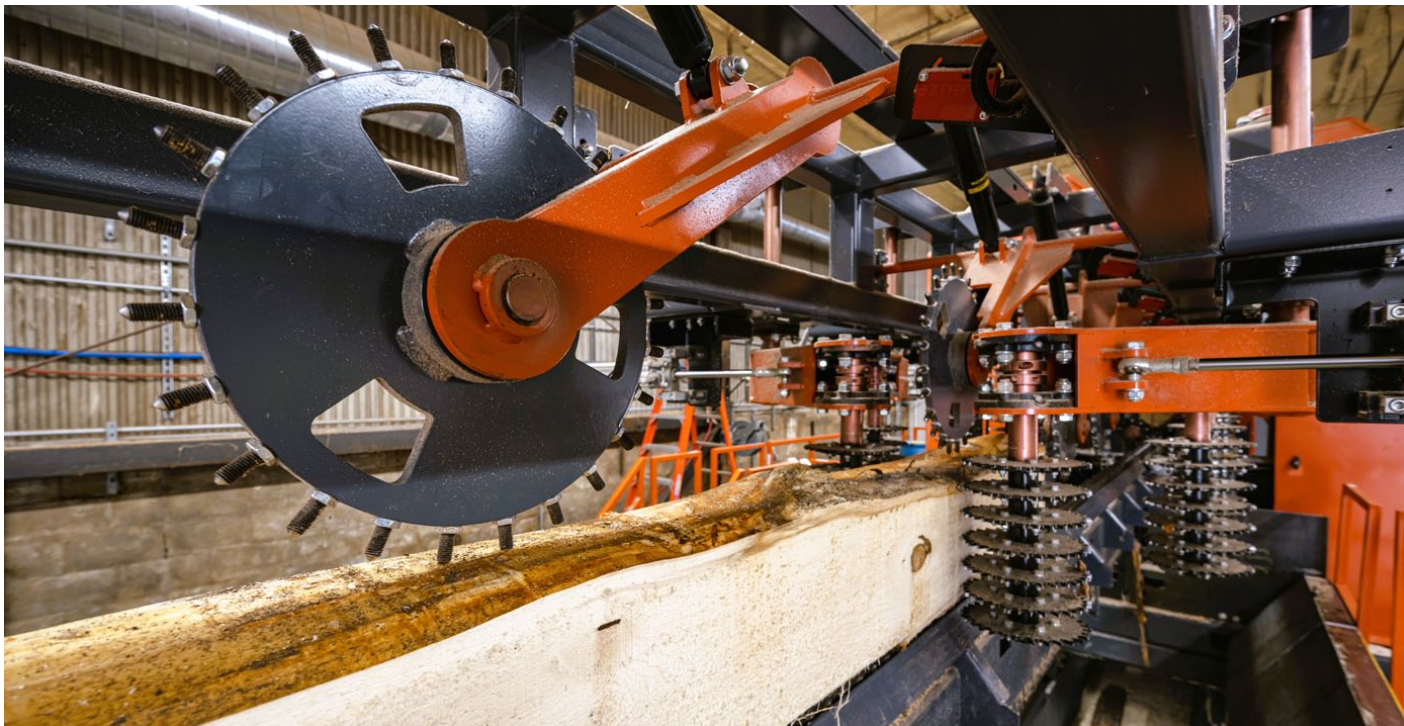
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Nelson Wood Shimms relies on the MR600 Multi-rip gang saw to produce high quality boards.

coupled with pressurised hold-down rollers and a sharp feed chain. This allows for higher recovery at the multi-rips, also known as gang saws”.

The next stage is the MR6000 multi-rip saw that can make multiple high-tolerance cuts in a single pass. Optical sensors detect the presence of material, activating pneumatically assisted driven hold-downs to apply pressure onto the cant, guiding it accurately through the saw. “The MR6000 is a workhorse machine, producing the majority of the finished product in most sawmills”, says Murray.

Providing added flexibility, each machine is designed to operate as a standalone unit and can be configured differently in a sawmilling line should the requirements of Nelson Wood Shims change.

“Our output has increased by 30% to 50% with fewer people,” says Berg. “The consistent cuts through the gang saw eliminate a planing process. We depend on the system to provide highly accurate cuts along with an excellent sawn finish which improves recovery savings further down the line in the dry-milling and finishing process”.

John Smith, CEO of Wood-Mizer, says, “The design, solid construction and power of this system is matched to the customer’s needs. For many years, it will produce high throughput and top-quality results for Nelson Wood Shims. Our dedicated teams are focused on helping our clients build long-term solutions that generate maximum return on investment”.

“Wood-Mizer delivered on time and provided excellent installation service. When we ran into challenges, Wood-Mizer’s technicians were fair and reasonable as we worked through them”, comments Berg.

Peterson agrees, saying, “We appreciate the hands-on involvement, service, and commitment the team provides to support us. This is the start of a long-term partnership with Wood-Mizer”.



The belt conveyor centering table at Nelson Wood Shims.



The log loading deck.

Egypt invests in world's first date palm fronds HDF/MDF plant

German companies Weser Industrie und Anlagentechnik and Dieffenbacher are collaborating with the Egyptian EPC contractor MT Mixers to supply a high- and medium-density fibreboard (HDF/MDF) plant using date palm fronds to Egypt's National Service Projects Organisation (NSPO).

The facility is in the Toshka region and is scheduled to produce its first board in 2025. Weser is the general contractor for the turnkey project, which will cover an area of 400,000m². Dieffenbacher, a leading manufacturer of press systems and complete production plants is supplying the complete plant.

The project starts with a Maier chipping line consisting of a drum chipper with extra-large infeed cross-section designed for high-volume material, a feeding belt conveyor, a vibration dosing table and an integrated Maier re-chipper.

It includes chip cleaning, the refiner, dryer and air grader, glue preparation and dosing, the forming line and forming station, a CPS+ continuous press with Press Emission Control System, raw board handling and the sanding and strapping lines, pneumatic systems, automation and electrics.



The neighbouring date farm will supply the raw material for NSPO's new Dieffenbacher MDF plant.



Shredded palm fronds will be used to produce HDF and MDF boards in Egypt.

The contract includes a 29MW Dieffenbacher energy system consisting of a solid fuel fired steam boiler and thermal oil heater.

Adjacent to a 40,000-acre date farm, the plant will use date palm fronds to produce around 125,000m³ of MDF/HDF annually. "Usually, palm fronds are farm waste. In this case,

however, instead of wood, which is hard to get in this region, the fronds will be used to produce high-quality MDF/HDF boards", says Weser's managing director Ahmed Amrou.

The plant will boost the local economy by creating around 500 new jobs. Construction began in April 2023. 🌿



Fibre made from date palm fronds.

FSA expands its Grower Development Programme

Forestry South Africa (FSA's) Grower Development Programme has grown from assisting small-scale growers in company-affiliated schemes to securing funding and support for all new entrants, including those coming into the sector through land reform initiatives.

The organisation plans to strengthen its capacity in this area significantly. It is working with the government to:

- Do feasibility studies ahead of the settlement of claims
- Provide an expanded suite of settlement models to provide for different scales of claims
- Develop a crop ownership transfer model that can be used to assist new landowners to own a portion or the entire crop eventually and to use FSA as a "mandate holder" for post-settlement support.

Themba Vilane, FSA's chairperson, says the organisation is filling the gap created by the Commission of the Restitution of Land Rights withdrawing from providing post-settlement support. To make matters worse, neither the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment (DFFE) nor the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) can provide this support.

"It is also the area where our small-scale growers most regularly express the need for support from government and industry. FSA has submitted a proposal to the Presidential Employment Stimulus programme, which will simultaneously provide post-settlement support to land reform beneficiaries and other small-scale timber growers while taking more unemployed forestry graduates into employment", says Vilane.

The FSA Grower Development Programme has been developed to aid small-scale timber growers to address these challenges, with the objectives of:

The organisation is filling the gap created by the Commission of the Restitution of Land Rights withdrawing from providing post-settlement support.

- improving productivity, sustainability and the competitiveness of small-scale timber growers;
- supporting small enterprise development opportunities through new afforestation;
- supporting small enterprise development opportunities brought about by the transfer of existing State plantations to beneficiaries; and
- encouraging resourcefulness among new entrants in the Forest Sector.

To achieve this, FSA has identified three strategic interventions to address the challenges faced by small-scale timber growers.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The organisation is facilitating access to opportunities to develop the business and technical skills-base of small-scale timber growers by facilitating their access to:

- Business advice and planning services
- Forestry extension services
- Accredited skills development and training (short-courses, learnerships & bursaries)
- Mentorship support programmes.



Small scale rural growers. Pic by SAFAS.

EXPANSION

Supporting small-scale timber growers to improve their economies of scale by expanding their forestry operations and/or to work co-operatively with other growers.

MARKETING

Facilitating access to better marketing opportunities through providing support for:

- Group forest certification schemes (FSC and PEFC)
- Co-operative timber marketing and preferential procurement.

These strategic interventions are achieved through facilitators, who bring FSA's technical partners and small-scale timber growers together. Technical partners then offer support in the form of training, workshops and mentoring programmes within their areas of expertise.

The impact of these strategic interventions is closely evaluated by FSA's Business Development Unit and the relevant Small Growers Group District Committee and also by our technical partners and the respective Municipality Local Economic Development (LED) units. 🌱

US\$2bn bamboo agroforestry project for Mpumalanga

A UK-based company has signed a memorandum of understanding with Mpumalanga's Manala Mgibe Community Property Association (CPA), representing the Manala Mgibe community and Traditional Council to transform about 200,000ha of unused land in Mpumalanga into a \$2bn sustainable land management agroforestry project over the next ten years.

The MOU with the community gives Terragrñ a long-term lease in the initial phases for 350,000ha. It will select a suitable 200,000ha for planting a third with non-invasive varieties of bamboo plants. The rest of the area will include fruit trees, nuts and cereal.

Sundar Bharadwaj, Terragrñ's CEO says bamboo emits 35% more oxygen than other plants, absorbs 40% more CO₂, and grows to full maturity in four years. New shoots grow to full height in six to 12 months.

Terragrñ expects to harvest 11m tonnes of dry bamboo biomass annually in the coal-mining heartland of Mpumalanga. The harvested bamboo will be converted to small biomass pellets and shipped to industrial customers around the world in the power-generation and heating sectors to replace coal and wood pellets and reduce carbon emissions.

Bharadwaj says more than 50,000 jobs can be created in the next ten years through the transformation of the land. The project intends to engage 300-plus local female entrepreneurs to run the business and become stakeholders.

"Bamboo lives for 60 to 120 years, so a female entrepreneur can pass on her part of the business to her daughter, and the legacy continues", he says.

In a February 2022 interview with Mel Bradman of the London Business School's "think" website, Bharadwaj said a large global bank has offered to "syndicate Terragrñ's multi-billion-dollar investment needs in the project, making the company one of



The Terragrñ bamboo agroforestry pilot project in Mpumalanga. Pic from Terragrñ Twitter page.

the largest startups in the world".

It is also focusing on Bel Ombre in Mauritius, before expanding its agroforestry systems to Kenya and Ghana, with five or six more countries later.

The company expects to generate 200MW-plus electricity capacity from forest waste for off- and on-grid solutions to support the decarbonisation of supply chains and reduce the use of fossil fuels in power and heat generation processes.

It is starting with an initiative to turn up to 200,000 hectares of unused, degraded land into a sustainable land management agroforestry project over the next 10 years.

Terragrñ says it has identified and verified 62 plant species for the initial phase with the Biodiversity Risk Management Office of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment (DFFE).

"Our aim is to build agroforests with species diversity that will safeguard food security, accelerate socio-economic development in local communities, and also support energy

transition away from fossil fuels to renewable sources.

"Citrus and other fruit, nuts, and cereals from harvests, planted in addition to bamboo, will be sold and distributed across local supply chains, boosting local and regional economies and creating business opportunities not only for farmers but also in the logistics, retail, warehousing and manufacturing industries," Bharadwaj wrote in *Business Day* on 16 March 2023.

"The project will seek to provide climate resilience for the local region while sequestering more than 160 million tonnes of carbon dioxide over 30 years, averaging 5 million tonnes or more annually.

"We are adopting a truly collaborative approach by bringing together government agencies, local communities, global foundations, multilateral banks, development finance institutions, institutional investors, research universities, regional NGOs and corporations to deliver on the vision".

A 68ha pilot project is under way. 🌱

GENTLE GIANT

PONSSE



ELEPHANT KING

K121

**ACTIVE
CRANE**



 **MTS**
PARTS

9 Suikerriet Street | Unit 4 & 5 | Nelspruit, 1200
Landline: 013 752 4571 | Email: chris@mtsparts.co.za
www.mtsparts.co.za