

CUSTOMER PROFILE



DOUGAL AND MATT STUART

Dougal's first forestry experience was straight out of school, ground based logging for an independent

contractor to the Forest Service in Golden Downs forest. A keen hunter, Dougal teamed up with Bill Reid of Nelson Helicopters during the heyday of live deer recovery in the late 70s and early 80s. As the demand for live deer declined, Dougal managed the recovery of native mill logs, ahead of logging for chip exports and then replanting in *radiata* for the Irvine family. The subsequent management and now the harvesting of these blocks is still managed for David and Mitch Irvine and subsequent owners.

In 1994 Dougal was contracted to the American forestry company Rayonier as their independent log buyer to compliment their top of the South Island harvesting operations. When they restructured and sold their Nelson and Marlborough forestry interests, Dougal formed his own company, Stuart Forestry Ltd as an independent log buyer and forest manager. Dougal's harvesting operations average between three to six crews, varying in size from woodlot harvesting, to larger hauler operations. Logs are marketed to a wide range of customers, pulp logs to the local MDF plant, export logs, local sawmills and pruned peeler logs to the plywood factory.

Dougal began his relationship with Appletons in 1980, buying trees for his own forest and harvested our first block of *radiata* in 1985 and all blocks subsequently. A mixture of snow and wind throw damage has made for less than ideal logging planning.

Dougal's oldest son Mathew began silviculture work in his school holidays, attended Polytech and began full time silviculture work in his father's crew in 1993. Contracted mainly to Rayonier, the crew also did private blocks, with Matt forming his own company, Nelson Forest Management in 2000. With eight full time staff, Matt has two very experienced

supervisors able to undertake all forestry silviculture projects.

In recent years there has been a trend towards planting alternative forestry and amenity species, with a need for people to manage these projects. Matt has risen to the challenge with innovative planting methods, interplanting of species, chemical weed control and progressive pruning regimes. Extensive travel in Europe widened his experience, which he has adapted to our local sites and conditions.

The close working relationship that both the Stuarts have with Eric and Robert Appleton regarding the trialing of species and mixtures, and their preferred growing conditions, has led to some innovative plantings. Success with *Quercus petraea x robur* (Hybrid Oak) on the heavy clay soils of the Moutere Hills has been very encouraging.

The ability to correctly choose the most suitable species for a particular site is only gained with on-site practical experience. Understanding and recognizing both successes and failures in the district is critical to the ultimate success of a planting project.

Dougal and Matt communicate on a daily basis, working together and for each other on numerous projects, many of which begin with the initial purchase, planning, planting, all tending through to harvest and the subsequent replanting. Dougal stresses that good initial planning of how a forest will be harvested and transported is critical.

A very good example is the newly planted KKB Carbon Farm on the Eastern Foothills, close to Brightwater, Nelson. Careful planning of a roading and ultimate harvesting infrastructure, and the use of multiple species in the planting programme, has given a mix of carbon sequestration and long term harvesting options.

The Stuarts' philosophy is that to succeed in forestry, it is all about successful relationships between suppliers, contractors and the client.

