

## Letters

Dear Sir,

A recent meeting of the local section of the New Zealand Institute of Foresters debated the question concerning the gap between researchers and practitioners. Although no consensus was reached it was evident that many practitioners feel the gap is very important.

Individual views expressed were:

Means of communication by the Forestry Research Institute are "a disaster".

Scientists are "non-doers" as against practitioners, who are "doers".

Research reports are unreadable and have no relevance to practical forestry operations.

Not enough useful results are getting to the people who want them.

Much of the Forestry Research Institute's efforts in communication are examples of how not to get the message across.

A lot of research results are written in specialist gobbledygook for obscure journals.

Scientists have a self-perpetuating process; their research brings up more new research than results.

There is no one to evaluate the results of research so it doesn't get done.

Practitioners should be empowered to review research programmes and to have a hand in initiating them.

Counter-arguments put forward were:

Field foresters only take note of research when they want to.

Researchers are innovators and agents of change.

The job of research is to provide a range of alternative data, but the practitioner has to evaluate this before he can apply it.

The field forester has to work at being a consumer of research.

If researchers are not doing the right research it is the field forester's fault for not telling researchers what they want.

The Research Institute bends over backwards to inform enquirers.

Field foresters are stubborn and conservative.

Researchers must look well ahead to find out the problems which are looming up and work on them so that when field foresters suddenly find these problems upon them the researchers can give an answer.

What do Irish practitioners and researchers think? Is this journal an effective means of communication?

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Rotorua, New Zealand.