WELCOME to the inaugural Newsletter of the Sawlog Production Grant Scheme (SPGS) – the commercial tree-planting fund set up by the European Union’s Forest Resource Management and Conservation Programme (FRMCP). This Newsletter’s aim is to keep tree planters in Uganda informed about the SPGS but also to help you with your tree-growing enterprise - whether signed up to the SPGS or not. Hope you enjoy it and learn something along the way.

MONEY GROWS ON TREES – WE TOLD U SO!

The big news is that the first cheques were issued in November ’04 to planters contracted under the SPGS. Further payments have also been made since then. A total of Ushs99.5M has now been paid out to 9 private planters, covering 325 ha of new planting that met the approval from our first round of inspections. Well done to the trail-blazers:

- Wilfred Bugingo: Ibanda, Mbarara (private land).
- Busoga Forestry Co.: Bukaleba CFR, Mayuge.
- Edward Mupada: Kasagala CFR.
- Kamusiime Memorial Rural Develpt. Scheme, Bushenyi (private land).
- Tropical Tree Planting Agency: Kasagala CFR.

Fast-growing, high-yielding plantations is what we are about!

Left: The NFA/SPGS Plantation Team (left to rt): Obed Tugumisirize, Paul Jaconelli, Bric Milligan, Jones Kamugisha, Allan Amumpe and Israel Kikangi.
**APPOINTMENTS**

In mid-October, 2004, Mr Allan Amumpe was appointed Administrator of the SPGS. Allan is now your main point of contact for all SPGS-related issues. Allan previously worked as Training Officer for the FRMCP, so is no stranger to plantations.

In the same month, we also welcomed a new face – Mr Bric Milligan, who started as a full-time Technical Advisor on plantations. Bric has gained 10 years experience in all spheres of forestry (especially plantations) with the multinational company SAPPI in South Africa and he will work closely with both NFA staff and SPGS clients, passing on his practical skills.

**SPGS UPDATE**

There are now 22 signed-up clients with a total planned planting area of over 3,000ha in the first three years. Another group of 23 have had their applications passed after providing all the required documentation. These shall be signed very soon. The planned planting area for this second batch of clients' totals to over 1,500 hectares in the initial three years.

Another 50 application have so far been received which are being sorted to determine the appropriateness of their documentation. This process shall hopefully be complete very soon.

**Safari Diary**

Over the last 4-5 months since things really started moving, with the NFA/SPGS Plantation ‘Gurus’ (see photo on cover page) clocking up the kilometres and getting mud on their boots! To date they have visited many of the SPGS clients in Jinja, Mayuge, Mubende, Nakasongola, Bushenyi and Mbarara Districts. Further visits are being planned.

Our aim is to encourage private growers to produce quality sawlogs like this and at the same time to help them make a healthy profit on their investment.

Of course, they will follow up as regularly as they can. One of the satisfying aspects is that the planters – you – are almost without exception - very receptive to sound advice and are rapidly correcting some of the problems the team identified during the first visits.

**Summary of Findings**

If the SPGS clients were collectively receiving an end of term school report, it would read something like:

"very enthusiastic start but must plan better and weed more!"

From the first round of visits to SPGS clients’ planting sites, it was most encouraging to see a start being made at commercial plantations by the private sector.

However, many of the same mistakes surfaced at many sites – most notably:

- Planting targets were too ambitious at the beginning: large-scale, plantation forestry is not just about sticking the trees in the ground the right way up and coming back in 20 years time to reap the benefit!
- Most people had no clear weeding strategy and the weed growth soon overwhelmed the trees.
- Planning/timing was not optimal: often sowing (or ordering seedlings) was late and land not prepared on time.
- A number of people used the ‘taungya’ method for establishment, despite clearly against the rules of the SPGS contracts: results were as predicted – namely, poor stocking and terrible tree form.
- Some investors were being let down by poor advice from various quarters, which highlighted the urgent need for Standards and Guidelines and also quality, practical training.

Undoubtedly with the detailed Plantation Guide-lines now being circulated (see page 4) and in particular, with the site visits from the plantation
experts, SPGS clients will quickly gain experience and improve the quality and quantity of their planting.

**TRAINING**

Throughout 2005, there are a series of very relevant (and highly practical) training courses being organised by the SPGS/NFA Plantation Team. If you want to reach the standards required by the SPGS, you really should ensure that your site manager or supervisor attends. Such professional yet practical plantation training is really not available anywhere else: many techniques new to Uganda are being taught at these courses and one (or both) of the experienced Technical Advisors is normally in attendance.

Places for SPGS clients are on a first come, first served basis. Please contact Allan, the SPGS Administrator for your reservation.

Those who attend pay for their own accommodation, dinner and transport to and from the training venue (costs usually around Ushs20-30,000 per day). The SPGS meets the other costs of tuition, training materials, transport during training sessions and lunches.

The training is very practical, with only two morning sessions during a 5-day course being held in a classroom situation. 8 SPGS clients sent staff on the 1st course of 2005 (6-11th Feb). Feedback was very promising: and the venue was excellent: we hope you reap the benefits.

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**PLANTATION TRAINING COURSES – TO JUNE 2005.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6-11st Feb 2005*</td>
<td>Plantation Planning &amp; Establishment</td>
<td>Mwenge Plantations (Kyenjojo).</td>
<td>15 NFA staff 10 SPGS clients*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-16th March</td>
<td>Nursery Management</td>
<td>Katuugo (Nakasongola).</td>
<td>15 NFA 10 SPGS clients*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-22nd April</td>
<td>Plantation Maintenance†</td>
<td>Katuugo</td>
<td>15 NFA 10 SPGS clients*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-13st May</td>
<td>Plantation Planning &amp; Establishment</td>
<td>to be announced</td>
<td>10 NFA staff 15 SPGS clients*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-15th June</td>
<td>Fire Management Workshop</td>
<td>Kabale (exact venue to be announced)</td>
<td>15 NFA staff 10 SPGS clients*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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* SPGS clients should contact Allan Amumpe for bookings and confirmation of all courses.
† Trainees must have first attended the Plantation Planning & Establishment Course.
PLANTATION GUIDELINES
The NFA/SPGS plantation staff have recently started producing a series of very practical guidelines to assist tree planters with all aspects of the business. The first ones now available are:


These Guidelines are now available in a loose-leaf binder: hopefully everyone on the SPGS has received their copy; if not, contact Allan (see box below). Over the coming few weeks, others will be available (Pine Establishment; Nursery Management; Tree Species for Plantation Development in Uganda; Fire Prevention). Some 30 titles in the series are planned at present. Make sure Allan has your contact details so that you will receive all the remaining Guidelines as soon as they are completed as well as receiving revisions of older ones as they are updated.

The NFA’s Technical Services Division (TSD) also offer specialized services required by the SPGS applicants. Specifically, the TSD provides:

• Consultancy services in development of forest management plans.
• Environmental Impact Assessments.
• Business plans & market information;
• High quality tree seed and seedlings necessary for raising a good crop as recommended by the SPGS.
• Technical backstopping and on-farm advisory services.
• Forest Inventories.
• Forest surveys and GIS based mapping services
• GIS applications in natural resource assessments.

For more information on the services provided by TSD please contact the NFA Field Services Specialist, Mr. Peter Kityo on 041 230365/6 Plot 10/20 Spring Road, Nakawa.

NEED ADVICE?
Allan, the SPGS Administrator, and the SPGS’s Plantation Technical Advisors (Bric and Paul) are available to answer your queries and if requested, they will visit your potential planting site. Anything more than a day’s visit might incur a charge, however.

SPGS OFFICE CONTACT  Allan Amumpe (SPGS Administrator); Paul Jacovelli (TA) & Bric Milligan (TA): c/o National Forestry Authority, Plot 10/20 Spring Road, P.O Box 70863 Kampala, Uganda. Email: spgs@nfa.org.ug paulj@nfa.org.ug bricm@nfa.org.ug Tel: 031 264 035/6 Mob (Allan) 078 673 899 Fax: 041 342 607.