

ANNUAL TPCP/CTHB RESEARCH MEETING IN 2006

The annual meeting of the Tree Protection Cooperative Programme (TPCP) and the DST/NRF Centre of Excellence in Tree Health Biotechnology (CTHB) was held at the Forestry and Agricultural Biotechnology Institute (FABI), University of Pretoria on the 9th and 10th of May this year. During this meeting, the research progress of the TPCP and CTHB was presented to the various stakeholders and attendees, including forest managers, field foresters and forestry researchers. As in the past, this provided a unique opportunity for interaction and discussion of forestry pest and disease problems between forestry colleagues and TPCP / CTHB students and staff. Scientists from abroad with whom the TPCP / CTHB collaborates were also invited to give the audience a global perspective of forestry pest and disease problems. This year the visiting scientists included: Dr. Diana Six (University of Montana, USA), Dr. Kier Klepzig (USDA, Southern Research Station, Louisiana, USA) and Dr. Rich Hoffstetter (Northern Arizona University, USA), who have great experience in insect-fungal interactions; Dr. Paula Klasmer (INTA, Argentina), who works specifically on Sirex; and Mr. DB Chetri who works in pathology and entomology in the Kingdom of Bhutan.

After the TPCP meeting, the visiting scientists were taken to various field sites to give them a better understanding of the pests and diseases in South African plantations and activities of the TPCP and CTHB. The last field stop in this field trip was to the Sirex-infested pine plantations in the Bulwer-Underberg area. This was of particular interest to the USA scientists, as the Sirex woodwasp has only recently been introduced into that country. The USA is in the process of developing a control strategy and comparisons between the USA and South African situations were especially useful. The field visits gave rise to various discussions, ideas and even future collaborative projects, all which will add to a better understanding and management of forestry pests and diseases in South Africa.



Dr. Paula Klasmer explains the procedures used in Argentina to inoculate Sirex-infested trees with the parasitic nematode, *Deladenus siricidicola*. From left: DB Chetri (Bhutan), Stuart Charleton (Singisi), Philip Croft (Mondi Shanduka), Prof. Jolanda Roux (FABI), Dr. Diana Six (USA), Dr. Bernard Slippers (FABI), Dr. Paula Klasmer (Argentina), Marcel Verleur (Sappi).