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For Immediate Release

Growing Short Rotation Energy Crops: The potential explored

Taupo plays host to a conference organised by the International Energy Agency (IEA) Bioenergy Task 30 organisation this December to examine the potential of short rotation crops (SRC) as a source of future energy supplies.

Promoted under the banner, “Short Rotation Crops: Linking technology and biomass,” the conference has attracted high profile international speakers who will provide an overview of current knowledge in the area of SRC and country-specific case studies. Two companies with strong New Zealand connections – Crown Research Institute, Scion, and Pure Power Global, a renewable resources company – will be supporting the IEA host and manage the three day event.

New Zealand – and Taupo in particular – is an entirely appropriate place for the discussion to take place. The climate and soils of New Zealand provide many opportunities for producing biomass for energy. While forest residues play a significant part of current energy production, there are many other potential sources of dedicated energy crops. Opportunities include willow, eucalypts, switch grass and other woody and lignocellulosic species that have the added benefit of not competing with food crops.

Along with providing a background to current and emerging SRC, the primary conference theme will explore the technologies essential to creating a viable system. These include processes for converting SRC into energy for heat or biofuels, efficient harvesting systems and tools for land use optimisation. Another key aspect to be covered is establishing pathways to market. The event will conclude with a field trip to current SRC operations in the Taupo region.

Conference organiser and Scion scientist Ian Nicholas says delegates will gain a greater appreciation of the international and domestic knowledge on potential SRC, potential energy pathways and the role of technology. He says the conference will be of interest to land owners and managers, government agencies, bioenergy suppliers and investors, and scientists and researchers in the field of bioenergy.

Pure Power Global plantation manager, Kevin Snowdon, describes the timing as opportune. “New-generation lignocellulosic conversion processes represent a set of disruptive technologies that are now ready for deployment across a broad spectrum of feedstock resources in plantation forests in North America, South America, Asia and New Zealand.”

The conference runs from 2 to 4 December, with a pre-conference meeting for IEA Bioenergy Task 30 members on 1 December. Registrations are now open with an early bird discount available until 31 August 2009. Details and a registration form can be downloaded at www.shortrotationcrops.org/events.htm.

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For more information

Ian Nicholas Scion – Next generation biomaterials 07 343 5420 ian.nicholas@scionresearch.com	Kevin Snowdon Pure Power Technology +64 9 632 1009 kevin.snowdon@purepowerglobal.com

Notes to Editors:

IEA Bioenergy is an organisation set up in 1978 by the International Energy Agency (IEA) with the aim of improving cooperation and information exchange between countries that have national programmes in bioenergy research, development and deployment. The work of IEA Bioenergy is carried out through a series of Tasks, each having a defined work programme. Task 30 is dedicated to short rotation crops for bioenergy systems.

The International Energy Agency was founded in 1974 as an autonomous body within the OECD to implement an international energy programme in response to the oil shocks. Membership consists of 25 of the 29 OECD member countries. Activities are directed towards the IEA member countries' collective energy policy objectives of energy security, economic and social development, and environmental protection. One important activity undertaken in pursuit of these goals is a programme to facilitate co-operation to develop new and improved energy technologies.

Scion is a Crown Research Institute focused on applying a deep knowledge of plantation forestry, wood and fibre processing, plant/industrial/environmental biotechnology and biomaterials engineering to the development of new biomaterials from renewable plant resources. For more information please visit www.scionresearch.com.

Pure Power is a fully integrated renewable resource company focused on developing a portfolio of biofuels, and bioproducts that contribute to the sustainability of our environment. From the its operational headquarters in Singapore and through its technology centre in Auckland, Pure Power builds, operates and owns interests in a global network of renewable energy businesses producing sustainable energy, biofuels and bioproducts for world markets. For more information, please visit www.purepowerglobal.com.