



## DANISH CHOOSING RADIATA FOR FURNITURE

Humble radiata going Danish

29.07.2003 - By COLIN JAMES

Plans are firming for a Danish furniture venture which aims to take New Zealand radiata pine to high-end world markets.

And another deal is in the offing that may see pine doors made for European manufacturers by Juken Nissho in Northland or on the East Coast.

The deals come at a time when ministers are cooling on the idea of more electricity-guzzling pulp and paper mills to process the "wall of wood" which is coming to maturity.

Furniture adds more value to wood than pulp, paper or board manufacturing. If the deals come off, they will be a feather in Economic Development Minister Jim Anderton's cap.

Until Industry New Zealand (now part of New Zealand Trade and Enterprise) stepped in, Europe's top furniture companies did not know about radiata pine, and New Zealand forestry companies were not looking for overseas partners to make furniture, he says.

Surprising as it may sound to New Zealanders used to basic pine furniture, a Danish manufacturer, which cannot yet be named, has assessed radiata pine as a suitable for high-quality furniture, with the added advantage of international environmental certification.

The Danes are recognised as world leaders in furniture design. The company is committed to designing a new upmarket range for show at the world furniture fair in Cologne in January.

It is developing prototypes and is exploring setting up a manufacturing base in New Zealand, probably at Taupo, in partnership with Fletcher Challenge Forests, Government sources say.

This should be finalised by the end of October. The aim would be to develop the company's United States and Japanese sales. The plant would make finished furniture, not components, and would make the full range of the company's products for the global market.

As well as the venture adding more value to wood, Anderton expects the Danes will "teach their technology to New Zealanders" and lift the quality of the furniture industry as a whole to match international requirements.

And, unlike the lavish wooing of the movie industry, no government money is involved.

Industry New Zealand went to Europe to study how a mature furniture market operates, found that European manufacturers were unaware of radiata pine, persuaded some to come for a look and put them in touch with New Zealand forest industry companies.

Without that facilitation, Anderton says, the Danes would not have become aware of New Zealand pine.

No initiative had come from New Zealand companies to seek partnerships.

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