# Editor's Note

Susan Stamm has been serving as copy editor of this Journal, even serving as acting managing editor during the time the Forest Products Society was between permanent executive vice presidents. She resigned from the Forest Products Society in October 2009 and is certainly missed. Many thanks for your work and diligence, Susan. We wish you the best in your endeavors.

The Forest Products Society has contracted with Debra Illingworth Greene to do our copy editing of the *IJFE*. So, welcome, Debra, to the *IJFE*. May we produce many successful issues together.

The shift in emphasis in forest operations research toward woody biomass utilization has been dramatic lately. This issue of *IJFE* is no exception. Every article, with one exception, relates directly to woody biomass for energy in some way. The exception is an article on roads; and I would be willing to wager money that the road used for testing will convey energy wood at some point in the future. Cubic meters, board feet, cords, and cunits are being replaced by tonnes, moisture content, kilojoules, kilowatt-hours, and BTUs. Loggers who once drove over small trees to access the big ones now ask themselves how they can harvest those small trees.

It is with good purpose that we shift our emphasis toward wood for energy. Two years ago, a consulting engineer from Houston, Texas, told me that his company had a dozen new types of biomass-utilizing plants designed, with funding lined up and ready to start building. The only holdup was location – they did not know where to locate these plants so that a steady long-term supply of raw material was confidently assured. Obviously, competent information about the long-term supplies of biomass, by geography, is critical in answering the engineer's questions.

Another piece of critical information is the cost of harvesting and transporting biomass. When one considers that roughly half of bioenergy costs lie in the harvesting and transportation of the raw material, it is obvious that this is the field of greatest potential for economic improvement. Not only would biomass become more cost-competitive with other sources of energy, but the issue of locating facilities precisely within plentiful raw material supplies becomes slightly less critical if raw material cost decreases.

So, once again, forest engineering and operations research are little-known but critical components in the economic engine that drives our society – this time, literally. As we (as a society) look to diversify our energy sources, the work that we (as forest engineers, loggers, foresters, researchers, etc.) do becomes essential.

Cornelis F. "Niels" de Hoop
Technical Editor