MORE PRECISE
PRODUCTION PLANNING
AT SAWMILLS

Application development and customization of the software products for customer needs received special attention from appreciative participants in the national Sawmill Industry Days event held in the Aulanko district, Hämeenlinna, in early October. Operations at Savcor's customer sawmills have been considerably enhanced by promotion of production planning in sawmill operations, introduction of per-piece reporting based on camera data at sawmills, and development of graphical inventory management.

One of Savcor's partners is Westas Group Oy. According to Westas quality manager **Jarmo Joki**, each company has its own methods of operation, and customizing software applications to match these is important for ensuring a smooth and seamless overall process. When each application is designed together to take the customers' needs into consideration, daily tasks can be performed more quickly and easily, increasing job satisfaction.

– In the near future, it will become very important to harmonize current operations while implementing new operations at units and, naturally, developing the operations further. An example area for development might be the monitoring of length data for log-storage locations in the forest, Joki says.

He adds that a good production planning application significantly assists the planning personnel in their daily tasks and facilitates the monitoring of material flows in the production process.

–The production planning staff use the sales of ready-to-use sawn timber for submitting the log orders to the forest department and then ensures that the right products are ready at the right time for shipping to customers, Joki says.

DATA EXTENDING FROM SAWING TO PACKAGING

The per-piece reporting functionality compiles the production data – from sawing all the way to packaging – for processing by a separate reporting program. Previously, the data had to be collected by means of separate reports or transfer and conversion programs. The modernization was carried out for purposes of having a production reporting program that integrates data from the Meka ERP system and also data from the ERP system.

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FUTURE CHALLENGES IN RAW-MATERIAL PROCUREMENT

Equipment, automation, and software suppliers gathered in the Aulanko area in record numbers this year to listen to sawmill industry operators. The event was focused on the sawmill industry taking up the bio-economy challenge.

In line with this theme, the panel discussion at Sawmill Industry Days covered the various challenges that raw-material procurement will face in the coming years. For example, the volume of timber needed from forests is increasing on account of new investments by the pulp industry. Developing new tools that offer better incentives to forest owners and helping to improve the efficiency of material-flow control were considered to be important elements for responding to these challenges.

THE ZENITH RESPONSE TO THE CHALLENGES

Savcor's response to the challenges facing the industry has involved rapid development of the Zenith system for the management of raw materials. This system, which is replacing MekaWood, will provide an even better response to the trends visible in raw-material procurement. Zenith includes modules for timber sales, planning and monitoring of harvesting and transport, receiving of timber, invoicing, and issuing of purchase orders.

Special attention has been paid to the opportunities for interfacing the system with a broad range of current and upcoming systems and for integration with various services in the industry. The system uses and supports the latest standards applied, for example, for electronic wood-trade sites and in contracting
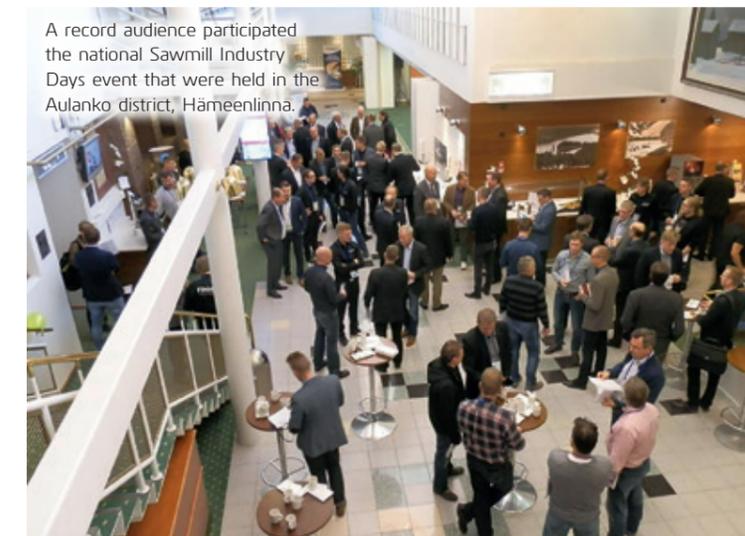
systems. Zenith will also support next-generation solutions for bucking control, and it will be possible to implement a bucking-control system through it too.

The Zenith solution will be seamlessly integrated with Savcor's ERP system for the wood-product industry, thereby enabling more comprehensive production planning that is even able to consider the logs that are waiting for transportation in the forest.

– Our company wants to provide the industry with increasingly extensive services and develop our products to meet the challenges of the future. To achieve this, our Forest Systems team has grown with the hiring of 15 new professionals since 2014, says **Mikko Kerkelä**, VP of Forest Systems.

He adds that developing sawing-production planning and per-piece reporting have been important steps in the development work. One of the greatest practical benefits of the advances is that they enable each company to monitor line-specific productivity carefully and pay increased attention to the utilization of capacity.

A record audience participated the national Sawmill Industry Days event that were held in the Aulanko district, Hämeenlinna.