

Young researchers evaluating new materials

## Description

### Front line projects for the forest industry

**The urge to find new materials and applications of wood and fibres characterize the work of young researchers taking part in the celebrations of the 2016 Marcus Wallenberg Prize.**

Young researchers with a vision for the development of the forest-based industry were invited to apply for a spot at the 2016 Marcus Wallenberg Prize Event and the Global Wood Science Days 10 – 13 October in Stockholm, Sweden. Of all the applicants the Marcus Wallenberg Prize Selection Committee chose to welcome a total of 37 post doctors and PhD students from different universities and research institutes in Sweden, Finland and Canada.

– The engagement of young researchers is decisive for the forest industry in the future. It is our aim to encourage them to take an active part in the development of the use of wood, says professor Kaj Rosén, executive secretary, The Marcus Wallenberg Foundation Board.

### Front line research

In their applications the young researchers presented their results and its potential for the industry and society as a whole.

Kaj Rosén has noted that the subjects of the postgraduate studies have changed over the last five to ten years.

– They have become more focused on finding new materials and applications of wood and fibres. Furthermore there is a focus on exploring physiological capacities of the properties of trees and how they can be manipulated by for example genetic engineering. There is also a great interest for improving the collection of data in different kinds of remote sensing techniques of forests, says Kaj Rosén.

Professor Gunilla Jönson, chairman of the Selection Committee, agrees that the applications represent front line projects.

– We don't see that many ideas dealing with the production process, but we hope the focus will change when the basic studies have been realized, she says.

### Seminar with the laureates

The 2016 Marcus Wallenberg Prize was awarded to professor Alexander Katsevich and dr Federico Giudiceandrea for the development of a CT scanner for whole tree logs.

The young researchers were invited to the prize ceremony where they had the opportunity to present their own contributions in a poster session at a symposium on the theme of this year's prize. They also met and talked to the laureates in a seminar, where other senior researchers and business representatives participated.

The Marcus Wallenberg Young Researchers' Programme is sponsored by Erik Johan Ljungbergs utbildningsfond, supporting education within forestry and the forest products industry.

– We are very grateful for the possibility to offer a special programme for young researchers from different countries. They had plenty of chances to discuss their work and results and exchange new ways of attacking new issues. Doing so they created networks to promote progress for themselves and their organisations for years to come, says Gunilla Jönson.

*Judith Felten, Umeå Plant Science Center, is one of the young researchers taking part of the seminars and symposium during the celebrations of the 2016 Marcus Wallenberg Prize.*