

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF TROPICAL FORESTERS, INC.  
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NEWS NOTES NO. 28

January 1970

A Minor Note on Wood Supply: Forest economists predict a massive increase in wood consumption during the coming decades. Europe alone will be faced with a deficit in wood that cannot be met either from her own reserves or from the usual supply countries. New sources must be found, and for substantial relief, consuming countries will look to the tropics.

Thus far, economists are in material agreement. But there is far less agreement as to just how abundantly tropical forests can contribute. Certainly, the long-term picture is not reassuring. Except for plantations, the increment from tropical forests is depressingly low. Worse still, vast areas are being swept out of wood production to serve other uses while many governments encourage orgies of overcutting in an attempt to strengthen their fragile economies. Meanwhile, untold thousands of hectares, including many "permanent forests" already under management are being invaded by shifting agriculture.

The extent to which these adverse factors can be controlled will determine in no small part how far the tropics are destined to relieve world wood needs. And here, many a tropical forester is confronted with the awkward fact that the productivity of his forest may depend less on forest management than on human management -- management in terms of the influence he can exert on industry, public officialdom and public opinion, to insure the permanence of his forest lands. But this involves the exercise of functions for which the forester's training has ill prepared him. Neither our forest schools nor our professional experience nor, perhaps, our natural aptitudes contribute greatly to effectiveness in this field. Routinely we include "public relations" and "extension" among our duties, but it is the exceptional forester who accepts as a major responsibility the systematic promotion of personal contacts and use of the many avenues of mass communication to create an atmosphere favorable to the management and permanence of his forest. It is a long, laborious process to convert apathy, opportunism and hostility to the adoption of a rational forestry program, yet on this may depend how far tropical forestry is to be a significant factor in world economy and in the quality of human living. - T. G.

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The Society of American Foresters, in a referendum submitted to its membership, overwhelmingly approved the Society's participation as a member of the recently-created International Union of Societies of Foresters.

The FAO Committee on Forest Development in the Tropics held its Second Session in Rome, 21-24 October 1969. Thirty-two countries were represented, together with four international organizations. K. Samapuddhi of Thailand served as Chairman and Frank Wadsworth of USA, Rapporteur.

Shifting agriculture formed the first item on the agenda. Because of the complexity and magnitude of the problem, the Committee recommended that further search be made for techniques which have achieved some measure of success and that the Regional Commissions be asked to contribute to this type of information. Member countries were also urged to collect social, economic and technical data that may enable them to achieve land-use programs designed to supplant shifting cultivation by a permanent form of agriculture. The Committee stressed the importance of international efforts toward solving this problem and for interdisciplinary committees to coordinate the work.

The Committee considered in detail steps for increasing the productivity of natural forests, including techniques of enrichment planting, conversion planting and removal of worthless species. It emphasized the need for fuller and more accurate information on costs and returns to be expected from the various methods both of natural and artificial regeneration, and cautioned countries to be alert to the need for basic research into the ecology and silvicultural characteristics of the various species forming the natural forest.

In discussing the technical and economic aspects of tropical savanna tree planting, the Committee agreed as to the importance of the social and indirect benefits resulting from such projects, but stressed the need for more precise appraisals of their economic prospects and for additional research into problems of tree plantations in savanna development.

Emphasizing the growing importance of tree plantations throughout the tropics, the Committee noted the need for an acceptance of common principles in conducting provenance trials. It endorsed FAO's intention to cooperate with IUFRO in producing a manual on the conduct of species and provenance trials and the analysis of results.

The Committee noted the growing uses of mixed hardwoods for pulp and paper and agreed that although technical difficulties have been largely solved, there still remain important economic problems, particularly of cost. The Committee believed that in FAO's Technical Assistance Projects for pulp and paper manufacture, stress should be given to the need for comprehensive planning for land and water use in addition to timber supply.

In the Committee's opinion the rapidly expanding markets for tropical wood augments the need for further strengthening utilization research and for diversifying the range of forest products, with a view to improving their acceptability in the world's markets. There is

still need for better coordination of research and marketing and for the dissemination of existing information on the properties of tropical woods. What is especially needed is a repository and library center to make information readily available to serve not only the needs of production and markets, but to function as a guide for future research.

Throughout the meetings emphasis was repeatedly directed to the necessity of improving the quality of data on costs and returns. These are often inadequate and too vague for general application. In this regard, the Committee felt that the Forest Services of member nations should place greater emphasis on forest economics.

In considering its future program of work, the Committee agreed to focus on problems transcending the geographic scope of Regional Commissions and to establish study groups to deal with specific subjects. It agreed to assign high priority to these broad areas: Tree Improvement; Cost-benefit studies; Utilization and Marketing Research. Meanwhile, the Committee recognized its responsibility to keep abreast of developments throughout the entire spectrum of tropical forestry on a worldwide basis.

Time and place for the next meeting will be announced by the FAO Secretariat.

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The German Foundation for Developing Countries was established in 1959 for the purpose of promoting cooperative relations between German and the professionals and technicians of emerging nations. To this end, it has organized seminars, conferences and study tours, and conducted training programs. Last year, in Bogota, Columbia, it held a seminar on the utilization of tropical forests in Latin America. Recommendations were largely devoted to correcting major shortcomings in the Latin American forestry situation. These included the need for inventories to permit rational forest utilization, land classification, intensified research, and training of personnel. A detailed account of this seminar and its recommendations appears in "Boletin Forestal y de Industrias Forestales Para America Latina", issued by the Regional Forest Office of FAO, Casilla 10095, Santiago, Chile. The bulletin is published in both English and Spanish.

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The Documentation Center of FAO has accumulated a wealth of technical, economic and social information, contained in over 25,000 publications and documents and now available free or at minimum cost. Current and retrospective indexes, as well as ad hoc bibliographies, permit ready access to documents of interest which may be obtained in printed form or in the forms of copies or micro-copies. Inquiries should be sent to the Forestry Division, FAO, Rome.

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Publications

The TIMBER COMMITTEE OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE has reported on its study into the consumption of tropical hardwoods in Europe. The Committee points out that the rational utilization of tropical hardwoods, including the wider use of lesser-known species, would be stimulated by closer links between research institutes, industry, and the consumer. Ready availability of information in a form that would be of direct use to industry and consumer, and closer liaison at the industrial level to avoid duplication of research efforts are particularly desirable.

The Committee notes that efforts to extend the comparatively narrow range of tropical species used by the woodworking industry have not resulted in significant changes, although the utilization of tropical hardwoods in Europe alone has increased more than four-fold in the last 15 years.

HARDWOODS - WORLD SUPPLY AND DEMAND (With Emphasis on Tropical Species), by S. L. Pringle. Part I of this excellent paper appeared in No. 93 of FAO's UNASYLVA. Originally prepared for the Conference on Tropical Hardwoods, held at Syracuse, USA, the paper presents a clear, detailed picture of the role that broadleafed woods, especially those of the tropics, has played and may be expected to play in meeting the world's needs for industrial woods.

WORLD WOOD PULP, by Thorsten Streyffert, published by Almquist and Wesskill, Stockholm, Sweden, is an analysis of the present situation and future prospects of the pulp and paper industry throughout the world. Comprising over 200 pages of text, including 90 tables, the book is presented in two parts, "Regional and Country Studies", and "The Economics of Expansion in Pulp and Paper."

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The World War Program is aiding in the financing of reforestation of over 7,500 hectares of forests in Colombia that have been wrecked by shifting agriculture and over-grazing. The chief species for planting are pine and eucalyptus, intended to supply raw material for pulp and paper and for construction purposes.

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ISTF members attending the Committee on Forest Development in the Tropics included K. Samapuddhi (Thailand), Committee Chairman; Frank Wadsworth (USA), Rapporteur; Aung Din (FAO), Secretary; John Lawrie (Cameroon), P. W. Chong (Malaysia), A. G. Voorhoeve (Netherlands), John Wyatt-Smith (UK), Clark Holscher (USA).