

COUNTRY STATEMENTS – Poland

Subject area 1: Management (silviculture, multiple use forestry, ecological and economical issues, marketing, information systems);

(a) achievements and important innovations, changes in legislation and policy over the past two years;

- Continuous increase of share of broadleaved species.
- There is a trend in tending cuttings to follow the natural structure of stand, putting more stress on bio-groups of trees and avoiding schematic approach to trees distribution.
- Small, but continuous, increase of share of natural regenerations – now at the level of approximately 5 %.
- Increasing role of mycorrhiza in seedlings production.
- New act of 8 June 2001 concerning farmland intended for afforestation. It describes which area could be afforested and anticipates financial support for farmers deciding to afforest their land.
- Act of 7 June 2001 concerning forest reproductive material. It will be put in practice after joining EU.
- National Program for Augmentation of Forest Cover was consequently carried out – 23 100 ha in 2000 and 22 700 ha in 2001 of barrens and abandoned farmlands were afforested.
- Updated Silvicultural Principles will be formally put into practice by the end of 2002.
- On 1 January 2001 the new rate of VAT at the level of 7% (previously 0%) was introduced for round timber.
- Certification process of forest management is constantly going on. Up to now 8 out of 17 regional directorates of State Forests (approx. 3.6 million ha) received respective certificates.

(b) difficulties that have arisen and measures initiated to deal with them;

- The stock of deer is still a serious threat to regenerated areas and young stands in many regions in Poland. Applied measures: fencing of afforested areas, repellents.
- Polish forests are endangered also by flood, snow and wind. Research works are conducted on stands stability.

- System of timber marketing, applied in State Forests, turned out to be inefficient, not reacting to changes in market and economy situation. It resulted in high prices and serious problems with selling of timber. This situation influenced on condition of sawmilling industry - 2001 was for this branch a year of reduction of profitability and worsening of ability to pay.
- Tendency in worsening of financial situation of State Forests was continued. The net profit was 139.1 million Zł in 2000, but the year 2001 brought the loss at the level 82.9 million Zł. Recently there were made some correction of rules of wood sales.
- Additionally, the storm of 4 July 2002 blew down approx. 3.5 million m³ in Białystok Regional Directorate (north-eastern part of Poland). It will have significant influence not only on local timber market.
- Private forestry is still very dispersed - near 900 thousand owners, area of average holding approx. 1 ha. This is the main factor making impossible normal forest management. The most important tasks are: inventory of forest resources, elaborating of simplified forest management plan and financial mechanism supporting private forest owners.

(c) emerging priorities for Joint Committee activities.

- Regeneration of big forest areas after calamities (flood, wind, fire and snow) is a challenge for foresters. It involves many aspects connected with removing of destroyed stands, production of seedlings, planting and tending activities.
- Role of natural gaps in forest ecosystems. Liquidation (afforesting) of natural gaps, especially on poor sites, results in biodiversity decreasing.
- Private forestry sector in the countries in transition needs a special attention - among others - supporting activities towards creating associations of private forest owners, consulting and training services.

Subject area 2: Technology (wood harvesting and transport, forest engineering, ecologically and economically sound operations in silviculture);

(a) achievements and important innovations, changes in legislation and policy over the past two years;

The total volume of felling and removals reached in (million m³):

- 2000: 27.7 (State Forests – 25.7)
- 2001 - 23.5 - State Forests only, there is no data for private forests

The harvest of timber by types of utilization (cutting systems) in State Forests:

- Clear cuttings – 24%
- Complex cuttings – 12%
- Incidental cuttings during final felling – 4%
- Incidental intermediate cuttings – 13%
- Tending cuttings – 47%

The degree of the privatization of forest services has been increased and recently reached in (estimation, State Forests):

- regeneration and afforestation – 80%
- supplementing natural regeneration – 80%
- tending measures – 80%
- cutting and bucking – 90%
- skidding – 95%
- transportation – 100%

(b) difficulties that have arisen and measures initiated to deal with them;

- Sector of forest services is still highly fragmented – there are approx. 9.9 thousand contractor firms, usually very small - 47% of them are one-person-staff firm. Only 14% of total employs more than 5 persons. Such a small firms are not able to accumulate funds to replace or modernize equipment.
- The system is still required to promote and support bigger reliable contractor firms using legal and financial instruments.

(c) emerging priorities for Joint Committee activities.

- Modern, highly efficient and safe technologies of wood harvesting are still required, especially in mountainous terrain.
- Silvicultural operations after acute forest damage (planning and executing).

Subject area 3: Training (of workers, supervisors and managers; applied ergonomics and occupational safety and health).

(a) achievements and important innovations, changes in legislation and policy over the past two years;

- Implementing into national law system following directives of EU: 89/391, 89/654, 89/655, 90/269, 92/58, and 2000/656. All directives were taken into account in The (National) Labour Code.

- National standards concerning human protection in working environment (equivalent to European ones) were elaborated and prepared for implementation.
- State of legislation allows introducing in Poland safety standards compatible with international standards and EU directives.

(b) difficulties that have arisen and measures initiated to deal with them;

- High unemployment rate does not act for respecting safety standards. This is clearly visible especially in small private firms where employers do not fully perceive the meaning of occupational safety and health.
- Introducing new machinery and technologies is difficult because of financial situation of forest contractors.

(c) emerging priorities for Joint Committee activities.

- Training and exchange of information on ergonomics and occupational safety and health using multimedia and Internet.
- More stress on training of decision-makers and supervisors.