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Seminar on

STRATEGIES FOR THE SOUND USE OF WOOD

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BAVARIA PUSHES FOR BIOMASS USE

Fifth session

**Paper by Reinhold Erlbeck
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Bavaria, Germany**

Summary

Renewable forms of energy currently account for approximately 10% of primary energy consumption in the German Land of Bavaria. It is the Land's goal to increase this proportion to 13% over the long-term. At present, biomass accounts for roughly 3.6% of the primary energy consumed, making it the most important source along with hydropower. Some 2.4% of primary energy consumption in Bavaria comes from solid biomass, principally wood. No other German Land uses as much biomass as Bavaria for power generation.

This biomass replaces roughly 2.1 million tonnes of fuel oil for Bavaria every year. That quantity of fuel oil would provide heating for 2.7 million inhabitants of Bavaria for a year.

Wood as a source of energy

Over the medium term we intend to increase the share of biomass to 5%. Roughly one sixth of the biomass used for power generation comes in the form of wood chips. A study by the Forestry Institute (Landesanstalt für Wald und Forstwirtschaft, LWF) shows that we could easily raise the quantity of wood used for power generation to 3.9 million tonnes. At present we use roughly 2.3 million tonnes of absolutely dry wood (wood and scrap) and 12 million m³ of wood production. If we were to use the 18 million m³ of wood that grow every year in Bavaria, 6.9 million tonnes-worth of wood energy could be generated. We could thus supply 4.2% of primary energy, the equivalent of 3 billion litres of fuel oil. With modern technology, therefore, wood is set to enjoy a real comeback as a source of energy. Altogether 270 thermal power stations running on biomass are already in operation in Bavaria.

“Forest heat” has an important part to play in raising the share of renewable energy.

Subsidies for renewable raw materials

The Land of Bavaria offers numerous subsidies to encourage the use of renewable raw materials, in particular for heat generation, and has concentrated somewhat on this sector. It has set up a “centre of excellence” for renewable raw materials in Straubing, which deals with the scientific, practical and economic aspects of the use of biomass as an industrial raw material and for heat generation. The aim is, by using biomass, to create new jobs with plenty of prospects, especially in rural areas, to find new markets for the local economy, to benefit the environment and to develop technology that can be passed on to interested countries.
