

GREEN EUROPE

NEWSLETTER ON THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY



EUROPE'S GREEN MANTLE HERITAGE AND FUTURE OF OUR FORESTS



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OF OUR FORESTS

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EUROPE'S GREEN MANTLE
THE HERITAGE AND FUTURE OF OUR FORESTS

This is the first of the "Green Europe" series to deal with forestry. It examines the forest resource in Europe - its role, the dangers which it faces, and the needs which it can and must respond to in the developing world timber situation. The Commission considers that more attention should be devoted to this vital question.

Europe's forests in a world context

Europe is less well endowed with forests than the world in general. Global forest cover is about 30 % of the land surface, whereas the Community's forest mantle is a little over 20 %. Of a world total of some 4,100 million hectares of forest, the Community has only 0.85 %, and its population of 270 million people have only 0.13 ha of forest per head. There is however a higher percentage in Europe of what is known as "closed" or dense forest.

Europe's forest cover 35 M ha or over one fifth of her land surface, and thus constitute a veritable green mantle over the continent. By contrast the Community's agricultural area is 102 M ha. There is forest in every region in every Member state. European wood imports account for more than 30 % of the world trade of 31,000 M. U.S. Dollars (1979/80) in this sector, representing 1.7 % of total trade. Yet while agriculture continues to occupy the headlines of the European press, forestry is mentioned less. It is indeed the "Cinderella" of Europe's natural resources.

The composition of the European forest, being mostly in temperate zones, varies much less than is the case in most other world regions. In Europe there are seldom more than a few tree species on any one type of site and

artificial plantations are often monocultures. In contrast to this there are over 2,500 species of forest trees worldwide (Europe has only some hundreds) and in many moist tropical forest areas one can find several hundred species in just one or two hectares.

The importance of Europe's forests.

Most people know that trees, with other green plants, contribute to the quality of our daily life by producing the oxygen we breathe, but few realise how important they are in safe-guarding the stability of our environment and hence our agriculture, and in our economy.

Background

To have an understanding of the forestry situation in the European Community it is first of all necessary to know the background to forestry in Europe, in physical, industrial and political terms. Most of the ten member states and the two prospective members, Spain and Portugal, have long-established forestry traditions and are engaged in active conservation and extensions to their forest estates. There are many important wood-using industries in Europe which have suffered problems during the latest recession. Some of these remain in addition to such forestry problems as "Acid Rain" and insect attacks on trees. Common problems can be tackled by cooperation on a Community front.

Physical make-up of European forestry

The distribution of forests varies greatly between and within the various member States. But on average occupies : 21 % of the Community's total land-area. Within Europe proper there are large forest massifs, whilst other often quite large regions remain almost devoid of forest cover. The map of Europe's forests recently produced by the Commission (*) gives an excellent view of this.

The total forest area is composed of 58 % broadleaved, largely deciduous species, the remainder being coniferous, ie covered with needle-like

(*) Available from the Commission's official Press and Publications Offices.

non-deciduous leaves. But again individual Member state figures vary, Italy e.g. having 76 % broadleaved while Ireland is almost the converse with c. 80 % coniferous cover.

The amount of wood produced annually on Europe's forest estate is about 2.2 m³, roughly the volume of a minicar, for every hectare, giving a total of about 78 M m³ in all. Figures for individual woods vary widely though and such an average figure obscures the fact that whilst much forest is unexploited, other areas produces much more than 10 m³/ha every year. Many new plantings are not yet productive so this further distorts the picture.

The diversity of Ownership and Management - A unique situation

Europe's forest estate is owned by private individuals or groups, the State and other public institutions.

There are some two million forest owners in the Community and many of the ownerships in the private sector are commonly small and fragmented, but despite this forestry in the private sector is typically well-organised. The percentage of State versus private holdings varies greatly (see Annex 1) throughout the ten member states with the State owning 66 % and 78 % respectively in Greece and Ireland while conversely in France and Germany private ownerships account for 74 % and 65 % of the total forest area.

Such variation greatly explains how the attitude to forestry alters between different member states. This adds a certain complication to the forestry situation in the Community.

With such a variety and diversity of ownership, not to mention the differing roles of the State and the multifarious fiscal systems of the member states, it is difficult to get an over-view of the ownership and management. a geographical generalization can be drawn on a North/South basis.

North and South - enlargement

What might be termed the "Northern type" of forest can be typified as being high forest, often even-aged, consisting of one or few species, managed largely or exclusively so as to maintain a high growing stock volume. Its chief purpose is to maintain a supply of tangible forest products, mainly in the form of timber, especially for sawnwood, paper and board products. The management of this type of forest is usually an entirely separate activity from agriculture.

The "Southern forest type" differs in form, purpose and management. Whilst the Northern image exists even in small quantities in all member states, the Southern one is limited to parts of France, much of Italy and most of Greece. It will become more important on the accession of Spain and Portugal to the Community. Seldom consisting of high forest in the accepted sense and, if unmanaged stunted to a remnant "Maquis" vegetation, it usually serves as protection, conserving water and preventing soil erosion. It provides forage and shelter to grazing herds and throughout its extent suffers greatly from the risk of fire. In contrast to the "Northern" type it is inextricably bound up in the agricultural life of the Mediterranean zone, so is seldom viewed as a distinct exploitable resource in the traditional Northern sense.

THE PROBLEMS FACING EUROPEAN FORESTRY

(i) "Acid Rain"

The great social and economic developments of the last decades have also inadvertently contributed to a number of undesirable by-products. The continued growth of industry and private car useage, and the consequent pollution, has very probably led to forest damage through atmospheric pollution.

Whether or not this is true has not yet been determined, nor, it must be said, has a direct link been proven between industrial and traffic pollution and forest damage through acid deposition and other pollutants. What we are certain of is that in Germany over one tuired of the 7.3 M ha of woodland has been affected by acid rain, and the damage is becoming increasing by evident in other member states.

Germany, which employs many thousands of people in the forests and wood-using industries, several Länder (regions) have suspended planned harvesting programmes in order to deal with emergency fellings resulting from deaths probably caused by atmospheric pollution. This is indeed catastrophic when one considers the careful planning which goes into forest management and the long time-cycle of wood production. There are then local problems caused by having to deal with the vast quantities of logs felled and the possible risk of a drop in the market price for such timber through over-supply.

(ii) Forest fires

Forest fires in the Community are another problem experienced by all Member States. Naturally occurring fires are rare in our latitudes and the blazes which Europe's forests suffer are mainly caused by unfortunate accidents or even de liberately. Annually over 110,000 ha of forested land are attacked by fires (0.3 %). These occur at peak times of dryness of the ground vegetation in forests, so whilst in the north of the Community the dry winds of March and April give most concern, in the southern EEC states where most fires occur it is during July, August and September that blazes rage. And fires are unfortunately on the increase. Despite concerted and coordinated action for their control, fires seem to be becoming more prevalent, particularly as tourism spreads into areas previously seldom-frequented.

(iii) The fragmented private forest - rising costs

As has been outlined earlier Europe has many forest owners and in the private sector ownerships particularly tend to be quite small fragmented, and non-contiguous. Apart from the organisational difficulties this situation poses from an everyday management point of view it also has a consequence in the market place for timber. Small scattered lots of timber are less attractive to merchants than large compact blocks. Because of difficult and more costly management before sale they are often less well-tended and with poorer access for would-be harvesters. Thus the wood-harvesting operation is a more expensive exercise than it might otherwise have been. All this means a lower return for the timber grower from his tree crop. Where the money is in any case quite plentiful as for large sawn-quality timber, particularly hardwood, the difference may be negligible, but for someone with a less valuable softwood crop of small dimension timber, situated a long way from markets then the increased working costs may become excessive. This has increasingly become the case since the 1973 oil crisis, for fuel costs have soared and made second-stage industrial processing of wood much more expensive. The parallel rise in transport costs over the last decade has further reduced forestry returns.

(iv) Tree diseases

a) D.E.D. spell DEAD

Two well-known agents of forest damage which have been important over the last few years and indeed continue to be are Dutch Elm Disease (or D.E.D) and Oak Wilt Disease (O.W.D.), caused by related fungi. The former has ravaged the European elm population, completely devastating in a few years a land-scape which had developed over centuries to become part of our visual heritage. This has been lost perhaps irreparably.

It used to be thought that the problem of Dutch Elm Disease was limited to Northern Europe especially where the elm population was genetically undiverse - this is because on the northern limits of normal reproduction most elms are produced vegetatively from for instance root suckers and so are genetically identical to their parent. Such a limit is no longer thought to be the case, and whilst the genetic make-up of north european elms has meant a more rapid kill rate by D.E.D. the various strains of disease are just as capable of attacking and killing the more

varied elms in Italy and Greece.

Thus, just as during the 1960s and 1970s the North became peppered with skeletons of dead elms, the same fate is now befalling many of those in the South of the Community.

b) Oak Wilt - unknown killer

By contrast to the known damage caused by D.E.D., oak wilt poses an unknown threat to the European oak population. It is an endemic fungal disease of the N. American red oak population, attacking the growing tissue of the tree beneath the bark. It has not yet been experienced on any European species of oak, even on old world trees growing in the U.S.A. It thus constitutes a totally unknown area of risk to E.E.C. tree hygiene.

(v) Storm damage takes its toll

The age old problem of windblow, that is infrequent gale force winds, blowing flat large areas of forest, has triply damaging effects :

- (i) snapping or cracking stems and rendering them useless;
- (ii) making undamaged stems uneconomically salvable and
- (iii) putting tree crops bordering the "blown" area at risk.

Windblow continues to make heavy inroads into the forest estate : in 1981 Jutland suffered severe wind damage but thanks to wise and sustained action such as log storage, much timber was salvable and market prices did not collapse. Wind and accompanying snow damage in Southern Germany in 1982 knocked down many millions of tonnes of timber, whilst France had many millions more blown flat in a November gale the same year.

(vi) Balance of payments

One problem is of course the vast trade deficit in wood and wood products. Some consider that this may not be a problem, even that it may be desirable to have such a deficit in this sector, but this is not the Commission's view because after energy, wood is one of the largest debit items in Europe's Balance of Payments, accounting for over 11,000 MECU worth of imports annually.

This situation would hardly change on the occasion of the next Community enlargement since Portugal would then be the only Member state with a net production surplus in timber.

SOLUTIONS

These then are some examples of the problems faced in common by the forest of member states. What is the EEC doing about them ? In the absence of a Community forestry policy there are various forestry measures and actions which have been implemented and to see how these have come about we shall look briefly at the background;

I. THE MEANS

Forestry could be considered as a natural part of the Common Agricultural Policy but its main product, timber, is not one of those listed in Annex II of the Treaty of Rome as recognised agricultural products. Nevertuelers at Community level, forestry is usually regarded closely with agriculture. The means of enacting forestry initiatives are threefold : through finance, through regulations and through administrative structures such as standing committees.

a) Finance

In terms of finance relatively little money is spent on forestry by the Community, amounting to only a few million of ECU out of Agriculture's massive 18.6 billion ECU (1000 x million). This out of a total Community budget of 28.2 billion ECU (1984) (1000 x million).

b) Legislation

Most of the important Community legislation affecting forestry in recent years has come about in common with that for agriculture for instance the various Plant Health Directives, that of 1976 particularly which sought to control amongst other things the importation to and the movement within the Community of the common commercial forest tree species in order to safeguard against forest pests. This regulation has had far-reaching effects, not least in the trade of Christmas trees by imposing checks for such pests as the great spruce bark beetle, and has led to improvements in general forest plant hygiene. From this regulation more specific member state rules on eg. Dutch Elm Disease and Oak Wilt have developed. Additionally many regulations have been passed which are

discussed below.

c) Committees

As instruments of administration the Commission has been responsible for the formation and fostering of various forestry-oriented committees. Of long-standing are the Heads of Forest Service Group (COFOR) and the Heads of Forestry Research Group, (REFOR). Like the more recently formed Standing Committee on Forestry and Forest Industries, these committees represent all the member states of the Community and meet regularly.

II. FORESTRY ACTION

a) Acid Deposition

Until recently this phenomenon only concerned one member state to any great degree but now that it is recognised as being more wide-spread a problem and increasing in significance very rapidly, the need for action at the Community level is very pressing. The forestry protection proposal put forward by the Commission proposes to tackle the problem by first of all setting up monitoring stations in the main forest massifs of the Community. The sites of these would be selected by the member states themselves and at them atmospheric pollution would be measured, tree damage observed and the soil and vegetation measured for mineral deficiencies. From the results obtained preventive or curative measures could eventually be postulated if correlations are found to exist. Multidisciplinary scientific teams would analyse the data obtained from the monitoring stations in affected member states and from them produce national forest health reports. Reports on the effects of any counter-measures tried out would also be considered and an overall strategy for combatting acid deposition be derived.

c) Forest Protection - Forest fires

The grave problems posed by acid deposition and forest fires have already been discussed. How are such serious matters being treated by the Commission ? In 1983 the Commission submitted to Council a proposition on forest protection against these two menaces. The proposal has

undergone much discussion and been modified somewhat and still awaits final adoption. It is foreseen however that the proposed measure would contribute 5 MECU to both preventive and counter measures in the field of forest fires as well as detection and monitoring systems for acid deposition which would include remote-sensing.

As regards fire-prevention, financial assistance will be given to the pruning of trees and clearance of brushwood under the forest canopy in order to reduce the inflammability of the forest as a whole. Such works will also include the construction of forest roads so as to allow access and at the same time provide barriers to the rapid spread of fire as well as further "fire-breaks" cut through the tree crop for the same purpose. Fire-watching systems will include the building of watch-towers and maintenance of air patrols to spot out-breaks of fire. The preventive measures themselves will also be augmented by an information and awareness programme especially in schools throughout the Community.

In terms of actual fire-fighting help will also be given to provide water supplies during fires for example by damming up water-courses at easily accessible intervals throughout the forest so as to make fire-ponds. From these the fire services will be able to draw water to battle against the blaze. Such measures are usually adequate if the fire is restricted locally at an early stage.

Unfortunately for our forests and their fauna and flora many fires go undetected or without the means of combat until such time as they have developed into large blazes. Sometimes such fires cover thousands of hectares and have spreading fronts of hundreds of kilometres and so demand massive fire-fighting capability to even contain them, still less to put them out. In this type of case it is often beyond the resources of even the national authorities concerned to come to terms with the fire and help is needed at the international level. This is why the Commission proposes to aid both national systems and promote international liaison in the fire-fighting sector. Funding would thus go towards the purchase of fire-fighting equipment and materials, such as fire-retardant chemicals, and the setting up of tactical and operational centres from which fires can be monitored and the fight against them controlled. Parallel measures would be to develop

personnel training and encourage the harmonization of methods and equipment between member states so that fire-fighting teams are not only more effective at home, but can more easily adapt if taken to another member country. It is foreseen that member states would then cooperate in a system of voluntary mutual assistance against large fires which often cross national frontiers. In cases where personnel are transported from one member state to another the Community would bear the cost. An Advisory Committee on Forest Fire Protection would also be set up as a control body on such international cooperation.

c) Forestry within structure policy

The types of measures outlined above reflect the Commission's encouragement of the integration of forestry with farming. Agricultural structural measures have long included small forestry elements and it has recently been attempted to expand these. The importance of such integration has been made clear as regards the southern regions of the Community but forestry also has a strong supportive role to play towards agriculture further north. Forestry measures can contribute to the conservation and amelioration of the soil, as well as helping to stabilise surface and underground water systems. Likewise forestry can help conserve the natural fauna and flora within a changing agricultural landscape by providing areas of sanctuary.

On the economic front forestry can make a good contribution to the income of an agricultural holding by better utilising farm labour, particularly during slack winter periods, and by giving higher long-term returns from land which is only marginal for agriculture.

Such assistance to agriculture often goes unrecognized and in negotiations at Council level forestry elements have been removed from or reduced in structural proposals. This may be partly because the long-term value of forestry is difficult to appreciate in the shorter agricultural time-scale, and indeed in a short-term reckoning such as five years forestry will not be seen to pay. It is for this reason that the proposed new Agricultural Structures policy provides a provision under which farmers planting trees may still receive agricultural subsidy for up to 15 years after land has gone out of farming. After that time the trees should begin

to produce a return for the farmer, at first as directly consumable firewood and fencing material and later, as the timber attains greater dimensions, as more saleable wood for sawing or other industrial uses.

d) EEC Regulation for forestry action programmes

Alongside the research which the Commission sponsor in forestry substantial funding has also been put into action programmes designed to promote forestry in defined regions of the Community. Among the regulations currently in force in this sphere are nr. 269/79 for the Mediterranean zones of France and Italy and nr. 1975/82 for certain areas of Greece.

The latter which only caters for 22 of the nomes or prefectures has just been augmented by regulation 619/84 which extends forestry aid to all 52 nomes. Most of these measures have a duration of five years and within the framework of agricultural infra-structure seek to promote the following :

- (i) Afforestation or tree-planting for the first time, particularly as shelter to farm crops and herds, or as protection against erosion and desertification.
- (ii) Amelioration of existing, poorly-stocked and/or unmanaged woodlands so as to improve their productive capacity.
- (iii) Torrent control. This is essential in many Mediterranean areas where the little rain that does fall does so in a concentrated period, usually in the early winter. Coming as it does onto an often unstable soil after the summer when the scant vegetation has been scorched and rendered inflammable, by the sun, the rain can be devastating. On an arid landscape the sudden downpour causes a "flash-flood" in which the ground surface is covered by a torrent of excess water which scours the land surface, washing soil and often large rocks downstream. If control measures such as barriers building, water channel construction and tree-planting are not taken whole areas can be rendered useless for agriculture. Needless to say the work is expensive and so the capital funds available under the various regulations constitute a good help to the regions concerned.

- (iv) Road-building. One big problem, particularly in the more mountainous Mediterranean forests is that of access. Construction of even a basic road opens up a whole range of possibilities for forest utilisation. Previously unused areas or those only grazed for foliage on an "open-range" basis can now be cropped for fuel timber and then replanted on a commercial basis.
- (v) Roads aid access for fire-fighting and the regulations also give assistance to fire-protection by funding the construction of fire-breaks, (areas cleared of vegetation to stop fires spreading) fire watch towers and water catchment dams for use in fire-fighting.

The foregoing assistance to forestry in the areas mentioned has come about regionally through agricultural measures and affects the southern member states of the Community. Eventually such actions will be replaced by an Integrated Mediterranean Programme which will include Spain and Portugal on their accession to the EEC.

Not at all forestry actions have occurred in the south of the Community. Several short-term measures have been put into force which include large forestry elements for the more northerly states. In the Western Isles of Scotland for instance regulation 1939/80 had forestry elements, as did a similar measure for the Lozère region of France.

A longer term regulation is that of nr. 1820/80 the so called "Western Package" of agricultural and forestry aids for the West of Ireland. Starting in 1981 this measure lasts for 10 years, with a 4 year review due in 1985. Some 27 MECU have been made available for commercial tree planting by small farmers on marginal agricultural land. The scheme is directly administered by the services of the Irish Government with reimbursement from the European Agricultural Guarantee and Guidance fund. Shelterbelts are also funded by the 1820/80 regulation and should contribute to the protection of farms from the strong winds experienced at the western edge of the Community. Ancillary works which are also eligible for EAGGF re-imbusement include : (i) ground preparation before planting, (ii) drainage, (iii) fertilization, (iv) fencing against stock damage and (v) fire protection and general maintenance for a period of four years after planting.

e) Forestry Research

Legislation, particularly such as that for Dutch Elm Disease and Oak Wilt has often gone hand-in-hand with research programmes. The Commission currently makes + 15 MECU available for forestry research which is funded by the services of various Directorates General. For example financial assistance to Oak Wilt research has been given in order to develop fool-proof fumigation methods for treating oak wood, either logs or timber, destined for export from the U.S.A. to Europe, as well as chemical indicator tests for verifying fumigation and for differentiating red from white oak and other species. Other research has set up trial plots of European oak species in the U.S.A. for their controlled inoculation, beginning in 1987, so as to test their susceptibility to the disease.

Similarly fundamental research on Dutch Elm Disease has also been sponsored into the causative organism into its vectors and into diseases of the fungus itself as potential means of biological control. Parallel to all this has been the development of new species of elm whose resistance to Dutch Elm Disease will hopefully be greater than that of the trees we have lost. The new elms, many of which owe their origins to Japanese species are being planted in trials in most of the E.E.C. member states.

Research is likewise being carried out in other fields. It covers the more fundamental aspects of forestry produce under the programme "Wood as a Renewable Raw material"; there are research projects on acid rain, all in addition the agricultural research programme which includes a special framework under Agri-Med research for innovative projects integrating forestry and agriculture in the Mediterranean zones. All these programmes are coordinated on an inter-service basis by the Heads of Forestry Research Committee.

f) Overseas actions - Europe and the developing world

It has been estimated that over 50 % of the world's forest resource is located in developing countries. In these countries forestry plays an important and direct part in the daily lives and general economy of the people. For instance whereas Europe uses relatively little wood as fuel, although the tendency has been to increase firewood consumption since the 1973 oil crisis, the world average is some 51 % of all wood consumption

as fuel wood ! Considering the vast majority used in developed countries is for industrial purposes this means that many third world nations use up to 90 % of their wood production for cooking and warmth.

Many such nations are themselves already short of wood and more will become so as their rising populations develop increased and more sophisticated demands for wood products. Many of the third world countries located in the African, Caribbean and Pacific regions are signatories to the Lomé Conventions. Under these agreements the E.E.C. nations allow trading concessions to ACP states in exchange for the guaranteed supply of industrial raw materials and other goods at reasonable prices. The Community also gives development aid in many spheres including education and training and Forestry is amongst these aid programmes.

In order to develop their national forest resources such nations need help with forest inventory and planning, in developing nurseries and plantations as well as experiments in and application of genetics, conservation and yield improvement. To meet these needs the E.E.C. provides funding facilities and a rich experience, often arranging personnel exchanges.

III. THE COMMISSIONS PROPOSALS FOR THE FOREST-BASED INDUSTRIES

All the forestry actions so far have dealt with specific areas of concern, but which represent elements of a concerted whole. Many of these are brought together in a Commission proposal made in 1983 for objectives and lines of action for policy in the forestry and forest-based industries. Recognising that, within the overall common framework which has been discussed so far, there are differences between member states as regards their forest estate and the state of their forest industries, the Commission has sought to suggest general but firm guidelines for progress.

The first objective is to increase the long-term wood supply to Europe by : - increasing the forest estate, more efficiently utilising and harvesting that which already exists, better forest protection and increasing the annual cut of wood to match growth. Secondly the proposals seek to increase log yields (ie the percentage return in volume terms on cutting regular-shaped timber from a round log), and increase the utilisation of sawing waste and the recycling of waste paper.

A third major objective is to improve the structure of the wood-using industries. Throughout the Community some 1.4 M people or 5 ½ % of all the industrially employed - a figure on a par with the car and textile industries - work in the wood-using industries. Whilst the average size of organisation is some 350 people, about 400,000 work in small, mainly privately owned concerns of less than 20 staff, many often self-employed. Although at the small-scale end of the market, which particularly covers the furniture, joinery and building construction trades, this structure is acceptable to meet the diverse and multivarious demands of specialised and local markets, at the other end this is not the case. The remaining million people work for large industries such as saw-mills, pulp and paper manufactories or panel producing industries. Their products have to compete against world competition and so the industries have to be properly structured to face this. In recent years they have not done so well and so it is the Commission's wish to aid them by improving the structure of such key-industries as sawmills and developing firms of optimum size to face competition.

CONCLUSION AND PERSPECTIVES

Forestry is important

It is clear how important forestry and the forest industries are to the European Community. In economic terms the demand for forest products in the EEC constitutes a debit on the balance of payments, not least through the drain on foreign currency on the one hand, whilst on the other contributing to the depletion of natural resources elsewhere in the world, which cannot easily be replaced. Demand continues to rise in the long-term and overseas supplies will become increasingly scarce and expensive as country after country bans log export in favour of processed timber, and the percentage of timber used as fuel remains high. So Europe must look to itself to produce more timber. It has long forestry traditions, and the physical and human resources to increase its forest estate and ultimately its timber production. Some countries such as France and the U.K. already have policies to ensure improved self-sufficiency in wood. The Netherlands too has just amended its forestry policy to increase wood production from 10 to 25 % of self-sufficiency after the year 2010. Greece has begun a similar expansion and other member states must do likewise whilst increasing their efficiency of present utilisation and recycling of used and waste paper. Meanwhile the science of genetics can also help.

Aid to agriculture

Forestry can offer part-solutions to some of Agriculture's problems too. The on-going dilemma over surplus products such as milk and beef could partly be resolved by bringing trees on to the farm for the production of high-quality timber on an intensive basis outside the forest. This would provide much needed high-value wood which will ultimately be unobtainable elsewhere, while taking small areas of land out of agricultural production and at the same time providing usefull employment to the work-hungry rural population. It must be stressed however that these are not instant answers and some research and experimentation will be necessary into such matters as :

- a) the lack of forestry tradition amongst farmers,
- b) the frequent antipathy of the agricultural population to forestry,
- c) how to finance the tree investment until the crops become productive, and
- d) how to organize the planning and execution of the work and the ultimate harvesting and marketing of the produce.

Public awareness

All this will of course be in vain if forests are allowed to go on dying from such causes as acid deposition. But one effect of "Acid Rain" has been to focus public attention on forestry and make people begin to realise how important our European forests and their heritage are, and what they could provide for us in the future. Let us hope that this awareness can be extended to the need for a general forestry policy for Europe.

Thought for the future

Forests along with other green space contribute greatly to maintaining our physical environment and the quality of our atmosphere. They supply large quantities of much-needed forest products, give space for physical and mental recreation for urban and rural populations alike, and add richness to the quality of the life in a myriad of ways. They should be safe-guarded, increased, and husbanded in order that we may utilise and enjoy them and their products in the future.

When ancient Athens was under siege, the citizens consulted their oracle. "Trust in your wooden walls" came the reply. The Athenians wisely interpreted this as advice to construct ships for their navy, and thus were saved. For the European Community today the oracle's message would be that the wooden walls are the banks of trees that we should be planting for our future and our children's heritage.

TABLE I

FORESTRY AND WOOD IN THE COMMUNITY

	Belgique/ België	BR Deutsch- land	Danmark	France	United Kingdom	Ελλάδα	Italia	Ireland	Luxem- bourg	Nederland	EUR 10
	616	7 323	493	15 075	2 100	2 512	6 363	382	82	309	35 255
Wooded area □ 1 000 ha											
Woodland as a percentage of total area Total area 1 000 ha	20 3 052	29 24 869	11 4 308	27 54 909	9 24 411	19 13 199	21 30 126	6 7 028	31 259	8 3 729	21 165 890
Classification of wooded area according to species types ▨ Coniferous (%) □ Broadleaved (%)	53 47	34 66	37 63	67 38	33 67	61 39	78 24	22 78	68 32	36 64	58 42
Classification of wooded area according to ownership ■ State forests (%) ▨ Other publicly-owned forests (%) □ Private forests (%)	53 35 12	46 24 30	66 4 30	74 18 10	55 - 45	12 22 68	60 34 6	21 1 78	54 38 8	46 23 31	59 20 21
Gross production of wood under bark □ 1 000 m ³	2450 9944	28451 29885	1596 7894	29342 45461	4280 44823	2880 3316	6941 34446	393 2769	251	173 937	12220
Consumption in roundwood equivalent □ 1 000 m ³											
Deficit or surplus of wood production (-) (+) 1000 m ³ (estimated)	-7 500	-1 400	-6 300	-16 000	-40 500	-430	-27 500	-2 400	+ 80	-11 300	-113 360

TABLE II

A COMPARISON OF PRINCIPAL FORESTRY & TIMBER STATISTICS FOR THE MAIN TRADING GROUPS IN THE WORLD (1981)

TRADING GROUP	(1) SURFACE AREA M.ha	(2) FOREST AREA M.ha	(3) % (2) of (1)	(4) VOLUME OF WOOD PRODUCTION (M.m3)	(5) % FUELWOOD IN (4)	(6) TRADING BALANCE SHEET WOOD & WOOD PRODUCTS			(7) NET TRADE IN WOOD PULP & CORK	(8) OVERALL TRADE BALANCE (6c + 7)	UNITS (FINANCE FIGURES)
						(A) IMPORTS	(B) EXPORTS	(C) NET			
WORLD	13 400	4 100	30.6	3 020	53 %	NOT AVAILABLE	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-
U.S.A.	936.3	299	31.9	420	15 %	5 006.9	4 502.9	- 504.0	+ 142.8	- 362.9	M. E.C.U.
						5 590.0	5 027.3	- 562.7	+ 159.5	- 403.2	M. \$ U.S.
JAPAN	37.2	25	67.2	33.9	2 %	8 791.8	166.8	-8624.9	- 753.1	- 9378.0	M. E.C.U.
						9 815.6	186.3	-9629.3	- 840.8	-10470.1	M. \$ U.S.
U.S.S.R.	2 240	929	41.5	354	22 %	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	M. E.C.U.
											M. \$ U.S.
E.E.C. (10)	166	34.9	21	89.2	22 %	14 333.9	3 973.8	-10358.7	-3841.7	-14200.9	M. E.C.U.
						16 003.1	4 436.6	-11565.5	-4289.1	-15854.6	M. \$ U.S.
"CANDIDATE COUNTRIES OF THE E.E.C."											
SPAIN	50.5	12.5	24.7	11.6	10 %	534.1	216.3	- 317.8	+ 3.3	- 314.5	M. E.C.U.
						596.3	241.5	- 354.8	+ 3.7	- 351.1	M. \$ U.S.
PORTUGAL	9.2	3.0	32.6	9.3	5 %	190.6	238.6	+ 48.0	+ 356.9	+ 404.9	M. E.C.U.
						212.8	266.4	+ 53.6	+ 398.5	+ 452.1	M. \$ U.S.

M. = 1 Million.

1 E.C.U. = 1.11645 U.S. Dollars (1981 Average).

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