



FOREST ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

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May colloquia

There will be two colloquia in May. On Monday, 10th May, Juhani Numminen will talk about field reservation and reforestation in Finland. The colloquium will begin at 2.15 p.m. in the department's conference room.

On Monday, 24th May, Mr. Alexander Vostrikov of the Soviet Embassy in Helsinki will show a film on logging operations in the U.S.S.R., after which he will talk about the development of forestry in the new Soviet 5-year plan. This meeting will be held in lecture hall I in Metsätalo, beginning at 2.15 p.m.

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Juhani Numminen: Afforestation of agricultural land under soil-bank contracts

(Summary from Silva Fennica, 4, 1970)

Under the soil-bank act, which took effect in 1969, 85 000 ha of agricultural land have been withdrawn from agricultural production in order to reduce the large surpluses of grain and butter in Finland. Farmers have the possibility of afforesting their soil-bank land partly with help from public funds; if they choose to do so, they receive compensation of 250 Fmk for 15 years, instead of the nine years which is the maximum duration of a soil-bank contract.

The study involved interviewing 136 farmers sampled from a total of 13 368. The farmers were planning to afforest 13 000 ha by the end of 1972. The main species will be birch (40%), Norway spruce and Scotch pine (both 30%).

The main reasons (mentioned by 65% of the farmers) for afforesting the soil-bank land were the unfavourable conditions in agriculture. On the other hand, 43% of those who had decided not to afforest felt that their land is too good to be planted with trees. One-fifth of those not afforesting said that they themselves would not benefit from the afforestation and therefore were not interested in investing in forestry. Farmers who had taken a positive decision on afforestation appeared to take more positive attitudes in regard to forestry than other farmers.

The soil-bank act does not seem to be a permanent solution to Finland's problem of surplus agricultural products, since soil-bank farmers plan to bring two-thirds of the soil-bank land back into cultivation on the expiration of the soil-bank act.

English-language activities and international contacts

As this will be the last newsletter of this spring, it seems a suitable occasion to assess the progress made in the last six months in the department's English-language activities. The aims of these activities have been threefold: to ensure a high standard of English in the department's publications; to provide opportunities for researchers and other departmental personnel to practice and improve their knowledge of English; and to increase international contacts in research.

As far as publications are concerned, the constant stream of manuscripts requiring correction keeps the newsletter editors continuously busy. Articles published in Folia Forestalia and CIFF are in English or have at least English summary, and so far this year have included two doctoral theses. Correction of English has led to involvement in the discussion of the institute's publications, which many people are dissatisfied with. Certainly, the drab appearance of CIFF, the institute's main publication series, leaves much to be desired, especially when compared with the visually interesting lay-outs of Acta Forestalia Fennica and the publications of other government research institutes in Helsinki, such as the Agricultural Research Centre and the Marine Research Institute.

The use of English within the department has reached a high standard. Outsiders phoning are often surprised to hear English at the other end! Most members of the department have overcome their shyness of speaking English, and assistance has been given in the form of conversation lessons to those who learnt little English at school. Lunchtime conversation groups and outings in an informal atmosphere have helped the more advanced keep up their language and often acted as a forum for discussion of other matters of importance. The monthly research colloquium and the newsletter have greatly helped in making English an every-day means of communication in work and research.

The development of international research contacts is the most important part of English-language activities. Folia Forestalia 87 has been a great success in making the department's research known in other countries. Letters are still arriving, particularly from North America, asking for copies. Although 1 500 were printed, one of the largest editions of Folia Forestalia to be issued, it is unfortunately already out of print after only eight months. We would very much like to print a revised edition, but a problem is lack of finance. FF 87 was published on a shoe-string budget of 1 000 Fmk (£100 or \$ 250), which was all the institute would venture on the project.

When FF 87 was sent out internationally, cards were also sent asking if the institutes and individuals we were sending it to would like to receive the future publications of the department. So far we have received 93 replies, and they are still intermittently arriving. Only two answered no.

We would like to thank our correspondents in England, Germany, Canada, India and the U.S.A. who have written to us in connection with FF 87. A lively exchange of letters directly concerned with the department's research has developed in a number of directions. In order to keep friends of the department in other countries in touch with what is going on, we have been sending out our monthly newsletter. This has greatly eased general correspondence. Instead of writing numerous letters to individuals outlining separately each time what is happening here, it is much easier to send a regular newsletter. Reaction from abroad has been favourable. One correspondent in Maine, U.S.A., said he was circulating our "unique departmental newsletter" to his American and Canadian colleagues. Friends at Syracuse, U.S.A., and Sudbury, Canada, have commented on the department's varied and lively activities. In England, the U.S.S.R. and Norway, too, the newsletter has been received with much interest. Strangely enough, what little opposition there has been to the newsletter has come from Helsinki, mainly from people whose knowledge of English is limited and who have clearly failed to understand the purpose of the newsletter.

The newsletter is intended to announce colloquia and other departmental activities, to provide news of the department, to act as a periodic supplement keeping FF 87 up to date, and to include summaries and short articles of topical interest in forest economics in Finland. We look forward to continue to receive letters and comments, from abroad or from Finland, offering criticism or suggestions and giving us a further idea of general reactions to our activities.

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Summer working hours

The short summer working days begin in time for Whit weekend on May 28th, when work finishes an hour earlier at 3.15 p.m., continuing as usual to the end of August.

Working Saturday

Saturday, May 22nd, will be a working Saturday to make up for the holiday on Ascension Day, which is May 20th.

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The vodka-bottle story

A month ago, I received the following letter from the President of IUFRO, Professor G. M. Jamison:

"Thank you once more for taking such good care of and delivering the precious shipment to us in Gainesville. The Permanent Committee found an occasion to properly 'liquidate' the assets. We all are grateful for your diligence."

The letter needs perhaps some explanation.

One hot day in June 1966, I met Professor Julius Speer in the foyer of the Trade Union Building in Madrid during the World Forestry Congress. He carried a package wrapped in a newspaper and told me it was a bottle of vodka sent by Professor Anutschin to the Permanent Committee of IUFRO. Speer said he had to return immediately to Munich but left me the responsibility of delivering the bottle, with the copy of Pravda, to the Committee.

The bottle was rather inconvenient to carry along to the meetings, so I decided to put it in the open locker or "pigeon hole", one of which was reserved for every member of the Congress.

Coming back in the evening to collect it, I was surprised to find no bottle or Pravda in the pigeon hole. The young lady guarding the lockers knew nothing of the bottle either. So I was rather anxious over the success of my newest responsibility.

The next day, I discovered that there were only 1 000 pigeon holes but more than 1 000 participants in the Congress. The administration had therefore decided to double up the allocation of holes: participant number 1 001 was given hole number one, and so on. Unfortunately, the administration forgot to tell the occupants of the holes about this double tenancy. So, apparently, my pigeon hole was also occupied by a Turkish professor whom I hadn't met.

Considering the fact that Turks are known to be rather hot-blooded, sometimes, and thinking he might easily take my announcement of the loss of the bottle as

an accusation of theft, I felt it wisest to leave matters as they were and write a note about it to Professor Speer.

In 1968, I was visiting the U.S.S.R. with three colleagues from our Institute. We were invited to visit Professor Anutschin in Pushkino near Moscow. So that I would be more easily able to confess my failure to deliver his present in Madrid, I bought a bottle of champagne, wrapped it in Pravda, and when we were greeted by the Professor I told him everything except the contents of the bottle. I asked him to relieve me of my task and take back the bottle.

Professor Anutschin was obviously amused by the story, which was interpreted to him with great eloquence by Mr. Rantapuu. He sent all of his staff out and took charge of us in person. We had a really great time with the white-bearded grand old man and his famous stories. But he refused to take the bottle. Instead, he ordered me to fulfil the task I had been given in Madrid and present the bottle to the IUFRO Permanent Committee in Florida in 1971.

So we emptied the bottle on the train between Moscow and Helsinki, recalling once more Professor Anutschin's adventures in Siberia.

In Helsinki, I told the story to my friend Mr. Alexander Vostrikov from the U.S.S.R. embassy. He soon produced three bottles of genuine Russian vodka, one for the original, one for compound interest for the period of waiting, and one for us to use in my office. Pravda can be bought at the railway station in Helsinki.

The bottles were brought without great trouble over the Ocean, despite the customs, and to Gainesville, where Professor Jemison finally relieved me of my long-lasting burden. He promised to testify to Professors Anutschin and Speer that the mission was accomplished. I am very grateful.

Lasse Heikinheimo

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