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THE NEW DECADE

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The New Decade. What's ahead? All of us have heard and read much about the seventies. One thing is certain, there will be changes.

In looking over some old publications from the Southern Forest Experiment Station, I noted one dated 1936 entitled, "The Weed Problem." We have a panel on this very topic tomorrow - the problem is still with us. Another I found was "Mechanical Advances at the Stuart Forest Nursery." It has a 1935 date. Jack May was nurseryman (Jack has been in the nursery business for a long time). Today the theme of our conference is "Equipment." We still need more mechanization in our nursery operations.

Floyd Cossitt published a paper, "Cultural Practices in Southern Forest Nurseries," in 1938. Floyd stated then that "large quantities of forest tree seedlings in the southern region have effected many changes in cultural methods employed at nurseries. Handwork to prepare the beds, sow the seed, weed, and pack for shipment has been reduced." I think this statement is still applicable to our situations.

Some of the old major problems such as seed testing, soil testing, seed procurement, bird control, and disease control are not as much in evidence but they certainly cannot be neglected.

The major problem now is scarcity of labor which directly affects weed control, lifting, grading, and cone collecting and now with national concern about a quality environment, the current efforts about banning and controlling the use of pesticides is reason for much concern.

1/ LeRoy Jones, U. S. Forest Service, SA, S&PF, Atlanta, Georgia, presented this paper for Mr. Craig.

Nurserymen have played a major role in forestry. You must be able to produce good quality seedlings in large quantities if the forestation needs are to be met; however, I hasten to point out that your responsibility is not over when you see the tail lights of a truck loaded with seedlings exit your nursery. The responsibility doesn't end until the seedlings have begun good growth because methods used to grow and handle seedlings in the nursery are factors that help determine the success of plantation establishment. How much do you know about the survival and growth of seedlings from your nursery? Do you get feedback?

Plantations are a common sight in the South. We've seen some ups and downs in acres established each year as witnessed by seedling production. We saw a tremendous increase in seedling production in the late fifties as a result of the Soil Bank Program which peaked out in 1959 with about 12 billion. This was enough seedlings to plant about 1-3/4 million acres. Then a sudden down shift occurred - which soon reversed and began a gradual climb until today southern nurseries are producing nearly three-quarters of a billion seedlings.

During the last 10-12 years we've heard about programs to help increase planting but nothing with a major impact has developed. However, I predict we'll see a major increase in planting during this decade. There are several reasons.

1. Change in policy of forest managers to harvest and plant with short rotations.
2. Incorporation of genetically superior seed into the forest.
3. Trees for People program.
The South's Third Forest program.
5. A proposed "Forestry Incentives Program for the Seventies" being developed by USDA.

The first two are self-explanatory; however, I would like to elaborate a little on the last three. Trees for People is a program sponsored by the National Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the American Forestry Association. One of their five goals is to develop economic and other incentives that will encourage non-industrial, private forest landowners, to apply sound management. Another plan is use of genetically superior trees with existing new emphasis on aesthetics, silviculture, site preparation, planting, and other forest practices,

The South's Third Forest, a resource analysis report sponsored by the Southern Pine Association, Forest Farmer Association, American Plywood Association, Southern Hardwood Lumber Manufacturers Association, and Southern Forest Institute, states that comparatively few of the million small forest landowners in the South are as yet practicing forestry. Yet by the year 2000, annual growth of the southern forest will have to total 13 billion cubic feet - nearly 70 percent more softwood and 40 percent more hardwood than was grown in 1968. As you know, the pressure for land and trees will increase so if we meet the demand it will have to be on less land and largely on small landowner holdings.

The first recommendation of the South's Third Forest is "Increased Federal and private financial assistance for tree Planting, timber stand improvement, and fire control." They state that 10 million additional acres should be planted with genetically improved seedlings by 1985 and that 20 million acres should be converted to pine from low-quality hardwoods. This will require no small amount of seedlings.

The U. S. Department of Agriculture through Forest Service leadership has just released a review draft of "A Forestry Incentives Program for the Seventies." The draft report is now in the hands of all State Foresters as well as other Federal and State agencies and forestry organizations. The proposal includes cost-sharing for many forestry practices as well as a bold new approach on loans, which suggests a non-recourse provision. If this program receives the support of the public and Congress with resulting legislation, I'm confident there will be another major upswing in demand for tree seedlings for reforestation So, be ready. You may be growing twice as many seedlings as you are now within 2 to 3 years.

Along with this increase will be a demand for high quality seedlings. Seed origin will be a major consideration; mechanization will be a necessity; and you'll be producing more seedlings of different species.

Some of you know that southern nurserymen have been meeting for about 35 years. Many new faces appear each year, so not only do you compare notes, find out results of latest research, and learn better ways of doing things, but you're helping to train people who are new in their job as a forest tree nurseryman.

This is your meeting and the program is arranged to make you a part of it. That is, panel discussion in which you can participate. You have a fine group, an excellent program planned, and an outstanding place to meet. I know you'll work hard and enjoy yourself too.