

Forest Tree Improvement in the South

Keith W. Dorman

Dorman I haven't prepared a speech or long statement because I know Ernie Schreiner wouldn't let me talk, three or four hours to adequately cover the subject, so I'm just going to bring you a few little news items and give you the benefit of some of our experience in trying to promote more interest and more work in forest tree improvement.

We are going to hold our third conference on Southern Forest Tree Improvement in New Orleans probably the first week of January, 1955. I think it probably will be a good meeting, and we certainly invite and appreciate attendance from other sections of the country. Another bit of news that may be old stuff to some of you is the formation of the Southern Institute of Forest Genetics under the Southern Forest Experiment Station. It will be established at Gulfport, Mississippi.

Their program isn't developed as yet.

The main benefit from our Tree Improvement Committee organization, I think, is the pooling of interest, facilities, and resources of all of the Forestry Organizations in the South. There was a lot of interest in genetics before we organized the committee, but there was no focal point, no machinery to get the information and the interest and the facilities together. Our Committee provided that mechanism. We've gotten together a number of summary reports, outlines of the problems, and the opportunities and these have been effective, I think, in increasing our facilities for doing forest genetics research and forest tree improvement.

The establishment of the Southern Institute of Forest Genetics is a recent development. Another source of activity that's developed just this summer is in the State Agricultural Experiment Stations. In the South up until the present time, most of the research has been in the field of crops and fruit trees but because of the high proportion of forest land in the South, a member of the State

Agricultural Experiment Stations are getting into forestry research. This year, Alabama and Georgia will have small projects in forest genetics research under the Research Marketing Act as a regional project.

Another item of importance that demonstrates the opportunities for cooperative work is the great southwide study in the racial variations of Southern pines. That is a wonderful example of what can be done with a large group of individuals working together, each one contributing a little bit in their field in connection with their regular work. The South plants a tremendous number of trees. The state of Georgia, for example, last year had produced over a hundred million seedlings.

Publications in the field of forest genetics from our work in the South are probably going to increase. Pines are very fast growing and we feel that gives us a wonderful opportunity to work out mode of inheritance of important characters. We have a lot of work to do in testing exotic species. We have no history of planting material of that kind in the South. We have no large botanic gardens or arboretums so that we're limited in our hybridization program right from the start because of the lack of tested plant material. We have no genetic programs or tree improvement programs in hardwoods at the present time, but I think that will come because of the importance of the hardwood-using industries. In North Carolina, for example, there is quite a concentration of furniture manufacturing plants who use hardwoods exclusively.

Pauley I'm going to ask Paul Rudolf to tell us briefly about the work in the Lake States. Paul is the Chairman of the Lake States Forest Tree Improvement Committee.