

BERICHTE
FREIBURGER FORSTLICHE FORSCHUNG

HEFT 66

The European Stem Number Experiment in Norway Spruce (*Picea abies* (L.) Karst.) 3. Report

IUFRO Working Party 1.05.05 "Thinning Experiments"



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FORSTLICHE VERSUCHS- UND FORSCHUNGSANSTALT
BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG

FREIBURG, MÄRZ 2006

ISSN 1436-1566

Die Herausgeber:

Fakultät für Forst- und Umweltwissenschaften
der Universität Freiburg und
Forstliche Versuchs- und Forschungsanstalt
Baden – Württemberg

Redaktion:

Stephan Herbstritt

Umschlaggestaltung:

Bernhard Kunkler Design, Freiburg

Druck:

Eigenverlag der FVA, Freiburg

Bestellungen an:

Forstliche Versuchs- und Forschungsanstalt
Baden – Württemberg
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Preface

At the IUFRO-congress in Wien in 1961, G. HELLINGA/Wageningen addressed the silvicultural problems arising from problems in marketing small-diameter trees. At the IUFRO-congress in München in 1967, J. PARDÉ/Nancy proposed a new IUFRO-working group (1.05.05) to develop a research program addressing aspects of thinning in Norway spruce stands and to install experiments according to the program guidelines.

Researchers at almost all research stations within the area where Norway spruce is of major economic importance were fascinated by the task. The particular challenge was to investigate biological and technical as well as economic aspects, and to explore new approaches. To properly address these questions researchers of the working group¹ involved scientists from the fields of silviculture, growth and yield, harvesting as well as marketing. In 14 European countries they established 29 experiments with a total of 457 plots (75 ha) and published two reports (ANONYMOUS 1977, 1981). Preliminary results and conclusions on some of the experiments were published by P. ABETZ (1983) and H. ERIKSSON (1990).

Unfortunately, the initial work of the late K. JOHANN/Wien on a comprehensive comparison on a European level initiated by H. ERIKSSON in 1986 could not be continued after 1999. Therefore, it was decided to publish the individual national reports together with a preliminary joint comparison and some conclusions based on the 12 experiments still under surveillance at the end of the 20th century. To facilitate understanding, we added the general aim of the research program as well as the guidelines for the experiments as a reprint from the 2nd report.

The working group may look with pride upon the accomplishments achieved by its active members, as well as numerous other interested participants in the experiments. For four decades, they contributed by sharing a wealth of knowledge and expertise and demonstrated by intensive discussions (no less than 11 work shop meetings taking place from 1969 – 1979!) that even a complex and controversial topic such as research on thinning strategies may be successfully tackled if a common goal is clearly defined and thoughts are freely shared.

We would like to once again call to mind the spirit motivating the original participants as expressed by the closing note of the preface of the 1st report from 1977, which we hope still holds true for the future:

May this joint project, initiated in 1967, help to promote communication among nations, and to likewise create accord in non-forestry related areas such that national boundaries will increasingly be a thing of the past.

Freiburg, December 2005

The editors

¹ The original participants in the experiments installed by IUFRO-working group 1.05.05 were: P.S. Saville (Belfast/UK), G. Gallagher (Dublin/IRL), H. Braastad (Ås/N), E. Bauer (Stend/N), H. Eriksson (Stockholm/S), Y. Vuokila (Helsinki/FIN), H. Bryndum (Klampenborg/DEN), P.J. Faber (Wageningen/NL), H. Oswald (Seichamps/F), F. Franz (München/BRD), P. Abetz (Freiburg/BRD), H. Petri (Mainz/BRD), J. Parez (Zbraslav/ČSSR), L. Chroust (Opočno/ČSSR), S. Korpeľ (Zvolen/ČSSR), L. Lehotský (Liptovský Hradok/ČSSR), J. Enk (Wien/A), R. Solymos (Budapest/H), S. Orlic, A. Dokus (Jastrebarsko/YUG), D. Garetkov (Sofia/BUL).

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