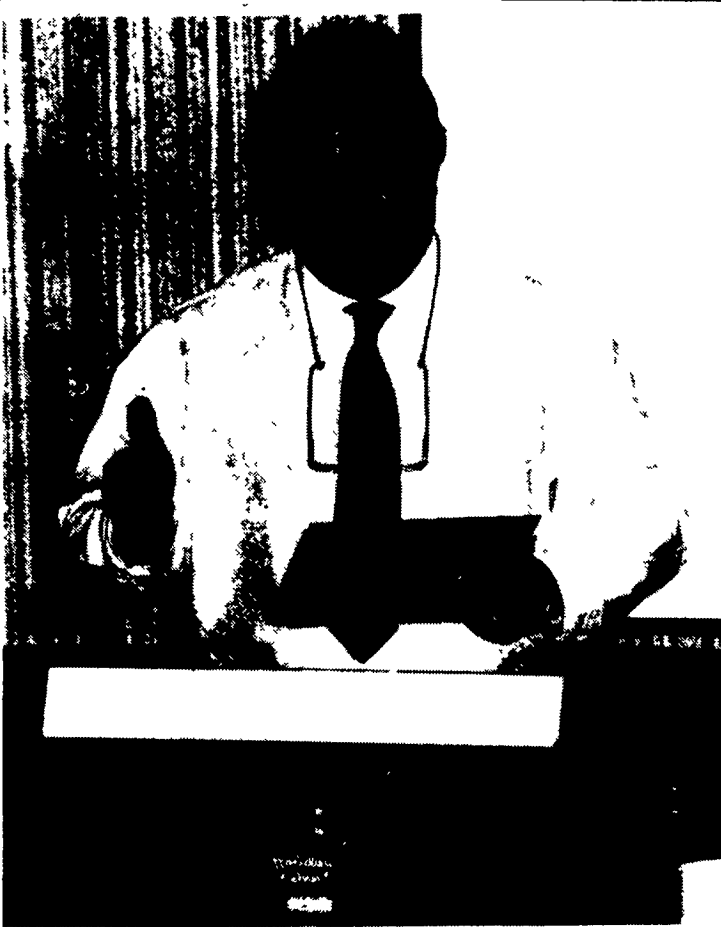


At S.E. Forest Landowner's Conference:-

Timber is Pa.'s 'biggest' crop



BY JACK HUBLEY
 EPHRATA — Timber, from management to marketing, was the subject of the Southeastern Pa. Landowners' Conference held at the Ephrata Holiday Inn on Sept. 29.

Co-sponsored by the Pa. Forestry Association and the Conservation Districts of southeastern Pa., the conference featured speakers from the Pa. Bureau of Forestry and Penn State, as well as private enterprise.

The event was moderated by Pa. Forestry Association executive director, Robert Clark, who, following opening remarks, turned the program over to extension forest resources specialist, Dr. James Grace.

Opening with some forestry facts, Dr. Grace pointed out that Pennsylvania leads the nation in the number of forest landowners, with the state's one-half million owners accounting for 73 percent of it 15.8 million acres of forests.

In the years immediately following a clearcutting, as many as 20,000 trees per square acre will sprout, he said. But by the time the

stand is 100 years old, the density will have dropped to 60 to 100 trees per acre whether or not the stand is actively managed.

"The purpose of management, then, is to select those trees that will live and those that will die," Grace said, adding that cutting is the landowner's primary management tool.

Grace urged landowners to familiarize themselves with the types of stands located on their grounds, and to develop a management plan contingent on specific goals, be they maximum timber or firewood production, or wildlife management.

The specialist briefly reviewed the current timber market, stating that, while the red and white oaks, cherry and white ash, may be currently in demand, the market will undoubtedly fluctuate in years to come. Just as important as species, is the form of the tree, he said. The most valuable trees of any species will be those tall, straight specimens, free of branches and defects in the lower area.

Dr. Grace then recommended management techniques favoring

the more desirable individuals. His recommendations included marking one "good" tree for every 20 feet, then removing competing trees on two sides of the desirable one.

"Remember that the total growth of a stand is fixed. You can either grow a lot of small trees or fewer large trees," he said, adding that the secret to maximum timber revenues is growing large trees as fast as possible.

Dr. Grace divided harvest techniques into even-age and uneven-age cuttings, with even-age techniques including clearcutting, seed tree and shelterwood methods. Grace advised that regeneration should be underway prior to clearcutting. The seed tree method is much the same as clearcutting, he said, except that a scattering of mature timber is allowed to stand to reseed the cut areas. In shelterwood management, some timber is permitted to stand in a series of shelter strips.

Uneven age management involves the selective removal of mature trees, a strategy that Grace could not recommend to the landowner due to its complexity. When harvests are based on this technique, he said, the result may be a woodlot populated with low-value species such as beech, sugar maple and hemlock.

About 65 percent of the timber harvested in Pennsylvania is suitable for saw logs and veneer, according to extension forest resources specialist, James Finley, who advised landowners to know what types of logs they were selling and what the current market was for their wood.

Finley said that landowners normally had the option to sell their timber for a lump sum or by single tree units. The lump sum agreement was preferable for most owners selling at infrequent intervals, he said. He also cautioned owners to expect some damage to their land and remaining trees, and added that prices will vary depending on the difficulty of timber removal.

Speaking on the erosion problems associated with timber
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Pa. Forestry Association executive director, Robert Clark addresses a group of 60 landowners during the Southeastern Pa. Forest Landowners' Conference held last Saturday at Ephrata's Holiday Inn.

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