

Forestry and CAP

Abstract to Brussels, September 2012

Presently, forestry rules and regulations are very different in the different EU countries. In many countries, these rules have been developed over long historical periods, without documented motives, and without foundations of scientific principles. Furthermore, technology, relative prices and scientific knowledge has developed over time. So, even forest laws and regulations that were rational from different perspectives in earlier times, cannot automatically be assumed to be rational today. Furthermore, in order to be FSC certified, you have to follow the rules in national forest acts. As a result, those who are FSC certified, handle the forests very differently in different countries within EU. This is true also in case it would be environmentally and economically rational to handle the forests in exactly the same way! For these reasons, it is important that the complete set of forest rules and regulations in EU is investigated and that a commission is initiated with the mission to make sure that the future rules and regulations are coordinated at the EU level and that they are rational with consideration of the latest knowledge development, environmental and economic objectives at the EU level. One important principle is the following: It should not be forbidden and it should not by law be made economically irrational for the forest owners, in any country, to undertake forest management activities that can objectively be shown to lead to a better environmental situation. For instance, in Sweden, the present forest act makes it very hard to undertake continuous cover forestry (without clearcuts). If you do that, the rules force the forest owner to keep a very high stock level (much higher than what is economically and environmentally rational) in the forest (§10 and §5). This means that the only economically rational way to manage a forest in Sweden today usually is to make large clearcuts. Without the mentioned §10 and §5, continuous cover forestry is often economically rational and also makes it possible to obtain high environmental values.

Concrete suggestion

Initiate a project with the mission to determine forestry rules and laws that lead to a better environmental and economic situation for EU. The Pareto frontier, where economic and environmental objectives are considered, should be derived. The ambition should be to include the most desirable rules in CAP.

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