

The forest business manages renewable resources

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The investment in the forestry sector is similar to investing in diversified agriculture in general: each investment project has its time of sowing, its time of cares and its time for harvesting. The difference lies in the period of maturation of the product, which can be very different, depending on the species of trees and the product to be harvested.

The extraordinary and advantageous climatic and soil conditions of the country has made possible the growth and development of both native and exotic trees, or introduced at a much faster pace than in other parts of the world, and gives Paraguay a significant competitive advantage at regional and global levels. Here the trees grow faster than in other countries, and they can produce in a cost-effective manner, both timber for industrialization and timber for fuel.

The fast-growing trees that can be planted to produce wood fuel are Ybyraryú, which is native or certain species of Eucalyptus, as well as the Bracatinga, Acacias, Leucaena and others, which could be harvest in two to four years.

Eucalyptus plantations between two and five years old could produce firstly timber for firewood and / or for the production of cellulose pulp, from the thinning of their plantations and then, from twelve to fourteen years old can be harnessed for industrialization as raw material for the production of tables and tie beams as well as wood flooring, furniture, sheets and wood plates.

There are other species of fast-growing trees that can produce precious woods such as Melia:Giant Paradise, the Toona, the Accacias or Grevilea with which you can produce in shifts of eleven to fifteen years wood similar to the valuable native species: Cedar, Guatambú, Yvyraro, Lapacho and others. The native species require twenty, thirty, forty and up to fifty years respectively for their maturation.

All these production periods, valid for Paraguay, are extremely short when compared with the time needed to produce timber in other countries.

In the Nordic countries, for example, the average maturity of conifers for paper pulp production is more than fifty years, and the period of maturation of precious woods such as oak can reach eighty, ninety and more years.

In general it can be said that the time needed to harvest forest plantations in our country would be approximately six times lower than in the Nordic countries.

According to Adhemar Villela Filho, directive of the company Masisa Brazil: "To manage conifers trees of the Scandinavian countries it is needed up to 120 years, against only 15 years in Brazil. In other words productivity would be 8 times higher". If even with these long periods the forest business is profitable, how better the profitability should be in our country and in the Southern Cone in general.

Example: FINLAND - Forestry Industry generates 21.000 millions of euros.

Finland is a country covered with lakes and forests. Sixty nine percent of its surface is covered with native forests, composed of Pine, Birch and Spruce. Another ten percent is water. Its population consists of 5.2 million, with 67 percent concentrated in urban centres and 33 percent in rural areas.

The journalist Juan Carlos Arguello, "Argentina Forest", who visited Finland in the year 2007, writes: In Finland, there are 42 paper mills, 43 of cellulose, 170 sawmills and 20 of wood byproducts. Over the past two years, 800 million euros were invested in the sector. Last year the production reached 21,000 million euros, which represented 17 percent of the Industrial Gross Product. The 25 percent of the industrial investment responds to afforestation.

The industries occupy three per cent of the Finnish workers, plus the indirect jobs generated by the cluster, represents 8 percent of the economically active population. Of 2.3 million workers, 200,000 are forest employed, earning an average of four thousand euros per month on average. 63,000 are employed in the forest industry, 20,000 in afforestation and research generates three thousand jobs. The labor system is 32 hours a week, less than in other industries also operating in Finland. 90 per cent of the production is exported, equivalent to 20 percent of the country's exports. 80 per cent of forestry exports goes to countries of the European Union.

The current forest business, as it should be implemented in our country has to do with the sustainable management and use of existing native forests, and additionally with new forest plantations. Each one of the activity to take place (cleaning, plant production, site preparation, planting, pruning, thinning, harvesting, etc.)takes workforce and generates benefits in the rural sector.

The forestry sector also involves the local and export trade, meets local needs for wood for their industrialization and enables the production of energy, firewood and charcoal, as well as food and medicinal herbs. Additionally employs large numbers of transport and other services.

The sustainable use of native forests and new forest plantations, besides from enabling the creation of jobs in rural areas as well as in industry and services enable further conservation and improvement of soil, and also retain clean air and water and beautify the landscape.

In summary: The forests have important economic and environmental benefits, demonstrable and measurable in each case.

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