

Meeting

Forest Fertilization, Paris

F.A.O./I.U.F.R.O.

AN International Symposium on Forest Fertilization arranged jointly between F.A.O. and I.U.F.R.O. was held in Paris from 3rd-7th December 1973. It was attended by about 100 delegates from thirty countries, including five from Ireland.

The symposium was divided into sixteen sessions, each of which considered different aspects of forest fertilization. The more important of these included a review of the effects of forest fertilization on the nutrient cycle, the diagnosis of nutritional disturbances in forest crops, kinds of fertilizers and methods of application, the effects of fertilizers on wood quality and the environment and the economics of forest fertilization.

The general impression obtained from the papers presented and



Three members of the Irish delegation in conversation with STIG HAGNER (*second from left*), Chief Forester of the Swedish Cellulose Association. Dr. Hagner has been responsible for the aerial fertilization of large tracts of S.C.A. forests in Sweden in recent years.

the discussions that followed was that, although a considerable amount of research has been and is being carried out on forest fertilization in different countries, there is still a considerable paucity of data on all the above topics. For instance, the longevity of the effect and the fate of fertilizers within different forest ecosystems is very incompletely understood. This has importance from two points of view, the economic and the environmental. Little quantitative information is available on the effect of different cultural treatments such as thinning, spacing, brashing and soil preparation on nutrient cycling. Further research is also needed to ascertain whether or not wood quality is significantly affected by fertilizer applications. The general opinion seems to be that it is not but that even if it was such factors could be overcome in the manufacturing process.

The symposium, recognising the need for an increased wood production on an ever diminishing land base, put forward the view that the effective use of fertilizers on nutrient deficient forest areas is one of the most promising means of improving timber production and at the same time maintaining or improving the other features of the forest environment. This could only be achieved by a thorough understanding of the complete transformation that takes place on the forest floor, and in the soil, and of the changes in tree metabolism following the addition of fertilizers. More intensive research on many aspects of forest fertilization was therefore recommended.

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