

This looked good on paper. Yet every year the planned volumes of chemical treatment operations increased. This resulted in the appearance of frightening notices in the press in the Kirov Oblast and in other oblasts of the RSFSR. These prohibited the grazing of cattle, cutting of hay and all agricultural work for a period of 45 days after the forests had been treated. Collecting mushrooms and berries was also categorically prohibited. Any bee hives located in close proximity to the treated area had to be screened. This hardly sounded like sparsely inhabited taiga reaches!

It is quite understandable that the public began to protest more vociferously. Several Soviets of People's Deputies prohibited the application of chemical agents within their territories. Lesnaya promyshlennost' was one of the first papers to write about this.

We received an official response to our article of July 15, 1986* from L. Mikhaylov, former Deputy Chairman of the USSR State Forestry Committee. He was extremely complacent: "The spraying of chemicals on young forests is carried out in accordance with current instructions, decrees and recommendations and has been approved by the USSR Ministry of Health"; "the human population and animal kingdom are in no way endangered by the chemicals now in use."

Today, when social democratization has made a significant advance, the situation has changed sharply. The RSFSF Ministry of Forestry sent a

*See Extracts from the Soviet Press on USSR Forestry and Forest-Based Industries, July 1986, pp. 50-56