

The road to the new method of doing fellings would seem to have been plain sailing. However the Ministry of Forestry (Minleskhoz) of the Tatar ASSR objected to the new technology. "Fell everything in succession and plant a more productive new forest", was the order that came down from Minleskhoz.

Minnikhanov made it appear that he was complying with the order but himself marked out a coupe for non-clear fellings. The next check was made and again there was unpleasantness. The checks usually ended in penalties being awarded to Minnikhanov.

I am not going to give a detailed account of all of the upheavals year after year in the struggle between the old and the new. Let us confine ourselves to the most recent years. In 1985 timber harvesting by the old method was being done on only six hectares, whereas 1,067 hectares were being selectively harvested. The selective felling technology yielded 70,000 cubic metres to the Sabinka people.

"It would seem that in that year the Ministry stopped noticing our 'misdemeanours'" said Minnikhanov with a smile.

Time flies. Some managers are replaced by others. The Sabinka enterprise was fortunate. Its new director - Rais Minnikhanov - is the son of the former one. He had started out in the same Meshebashskii felling district in which the new technology for developing felling sites had first seen the light of day.

Let us take a closer look at it.

Before proceeding to the plot where selective felling is to be done the forester and the forest rangers do a species analysis of the stocks of mature and ripening timber, and also of the underwood. It is on the basis of these studies that the decision is made as to the species with which to begin harvesting.