

During the last decade there has been a marked worsening of the hydrological regimen, an increased concentration of nitrogen in the soil and frequent acid rain. Today, there can be no question that there is a complex interaction between the various factors causing a decrease in increment and even the death of forests. With a view to devising ways of combatting forest pests and diseases, specialists of the Belorussian Forestry Research Institute and other scientific institutions have been engaged in developing the Sanitary State of the Forests" automated data base and making arrangements for monitoring the forests. If only this work would progress more quickly!

Whether or not the intentions and fine concepts are realized, there remains the unalterable truth: everything depends on who is working in the forests. Much was said about this at the Belorussian congress of foresters which took place in June. There were serious grounds for such a discussion. For parallel with the many-sided forestry structure industrial production is developing rapidly. At first, this type of activity was instituted on the forest farms with a modest goal in mind: to bolster the small budgetary appropriations. However, industrial production at our enterprises has now become just about the principal activity. For the truth is that not a single research institute has thought to set a sensible limit to the growth of industry on forest farms, or for that matter, validated the optimal ratio between forestry activity and production. This is why on the forest farms, both foresters and woodsmen are being wrenched away from what constitutes the purpose and content of their labour and converted into loggers of all ranks. What is our position on this? We maintain that the forest conservation workers should be returned to the forest compartments and that they should direct their efforts to reforestation, protecting and saving the forest.

At the State Planning Commission (Gosplan) of the Belorussian SSR the idea has been mooted that all industrial timber harvesting should be ceded by the Ministry of the Timber Industry to the Ministry of Forestry.