

"Golden Milestone" In U.S. Forestry To Be Reached In 1959

WASHINGTON D.C. (Special)—This year marks a golden milestone in American forestry.

Some time around mid-summer, the American Tree Farm System of growing trees as a crop on tax-paying lands will certify its 50 millionth acre.

Thus, 18 years after its humble beginning, the tree farm movement has flowered into probably the greatest voluntary forest management program on private lands the world has ever known.

The state having the honor of certifying the 50 millionth acre in the tree farm program will be determined in the normal course of inspections and certifications by tree farm committees in the various states. Only after the records have been filed with American Forest Products Industries, the national sponsor, will the locale of the "golden milestone" be known.

Not only does tree farming accentuate the multiple use values of timberlands — recreation, wildlife, soil and water conservation — but it is helping the nation to maintain a favorable balance of timber growth over removal. For the first time in many years the country is growing timber faster than it is being harvested for use and lost to fire, insects and diseases.

Tree farming is an industry sponsored program in which the landowner protects his trees from fire, insects and destructive grazing, and harvests in a manner that insures repeated crops. There are no dues, assessments nor subsidies.

Now active in 46 states, the movement is bringing forestry assistance to thousands of small landowners anxious to manage their timberlands on a profitable basis.

Tree farming, says James C. McClellan, chief forester of American Forest Products Industries, sponsor of the program, means:

1. Regular timber harvests, therefore regular income.
2. Wood to meet the nation's demands—present and future.
3. Better hunting and fishing.
4. More recreation areas.
5. Soil and water conservation.
6. Permanent jobs for thousands of mills and woods workers.

Unless the landowner can sell his sawlogs, fence posts, pulpwood, piling, poles, cross ties, fuelwood and Christmas trees, he may have little incentive to investigate the income opportunities of tree farming. For geographical reasons, there may not always be a local market for his timber. But the overall outlook is bright. Americans today use 5,129 items made of wood.

Since the term "Tree Farm" was suggested by a West Coast country newspaper editor in 1941, it has come to symbolize the best in forest management. Through it landowners are helping to meet the nation's timber needs today while providing for the requirements of the future.

In the United States today are some 4,461,274 "small" woodlot owners whose holdings are under 500 acres. They hold 61 per cent of the country's commercial forest land. Each year they take to market and sell \$700 million worth of sawlogs, pulpwood, posts, turpentine, Christmas trees, maple syrup and other forest products.

Because these small landowners control most of the nation's forest land, it is clear that increasing demands for wood open the door to greater opportunities for producing timber as a cash crop. The farmer who has paid little or no attention to his woodlot might well look into the advantages of forest management.

The farmer with the initiative and energy is the farmer who'll make money from his timber, provided he has a fair chance from nature. Tree farming is not something that the government, or anybody else, does for the landowner, although the landowner may get technical advice from a trained forester.

The American Tree Farm System is a program through which good forest management is publicly recognized. When a landowner feels that he is managing his woodlot wisely, he may contact his state tree farm committee which will arrange to have the woodlot

inspected. If the inspection by a recognized forester shows management measures up to standards of the American Tree Farm System, the landowner gets a certificate of membership. Also, he gets a tree farm sign for display on the land.

Whether a landowner joins the American Tree Farm System or not, he may reap cash benefits from a well-managed woodlot. If he applies for tree farm certification and gets it, his woodlot then simply wears the badge "Tree Farm" and stands as an example to others. This way the tree farmer is contributing to the tree farm movement by encouraging other landowners to grow trees as a crop.

The American Tree Farm System is administered by the forest industries through American Forest Products Industries, 1815 N Street, N.W., Washington 6, D.C. Industry committees administer it in the various states. Those who desire information about the tree farm program in a given state may write AFPI in Washington. To retain his status as a certified tree farmer, the landowner must maintain good management of his woodlot. This is determined by periodic inspections by foresters who work with the tree farm committee in each state.

The landowner who has never sold timber might begin by discussing his problem with a trained forester. There are some 17,000 of them in the country. Industries employ more than 7,400. The forester can cruise the timber and determine steps needed for sound management. There's a good chance that the woodlot needs an immediate thinning. This means that diseased and crooked trees may be removed and marketed. Not only will this provide income for the farmer, but it gives the sounder trees more "growing room." The growth of these remaining trees is much faster than before the thinning.

As time goes on, the farmer may select mature trees for cutting, or he may cut others for pulpwood, fence posts, fuelwood or general farm use. Once his "stock" trees have been established, he can figure on periodic harvests based on selective cutting. Never should he cut a tree without the advice of a forester, unless he feels qualified to decide for himself.

Keeping fire out of the woods is of paramount importance. Years of careful management can go up in smoke if the farmer doesn't take every precaution against this great forest enemy. He must plow fire lanes and never burn brush unless he knows he can control the blaze.

Some of the forest industries have their own tree farm "families." Under the "family" plan, the industry, such as a sawmill, provides free forest management services to a large number of small landowners in return for which the landowners may give the company first shot at buying the timber when it is mature. Some of the "family" plans are no less than gentlemen's agreements.

A growing number of industries are using the family plan and finding it highly successful. It is a step toward stabilizing their future timber supply without the necessity of heavy land-buying programs.

Tree farming is basic to an overall land use program. Multiple land use is an inherent part of tree farming as practiced under the principles of the American Tree Farm System. It means food and cover for wildlife. It means recreation, better fishing and hunting. It means better watersheds for lakes and streams. The floor of a tree farm is not vulnerable to erosion.

The files of the American Forest Products Industries abound in testimonies which prove that tree farming is profitable. Here are a few:

A Georgia man bought 325 acres of badly worn land, using wartime savings for the down payment. Improvement thinnings helped further with the initial financing. When his first daughter was born, he was unable to take out college insurance. So he planted 4,000 slash pine seedlings as a sort of insurance he could handle. Two years later he was able to buy an adjacent 303 acres, which he planted with 150,000 pine seedlings. Later he marketed inferior trees and started working them for gum and naval stores. This source alone will pay him about \$1,500 a year. In a few years his daughter will be ready for college and by that time a major portion of the trees will be marked for sawtimber harvest.

Another southern tree farmer reports \$4,500 from sales of forest products harvested from his woodlot. He became interested in tree farming several years ago when erosion forced abandonment of a hillside cotton field. The abandoned land grew up with seedling pines. Recently he sold several hundred dollars' worth of pulpwood off the land. He still has a stand of 10,000 board feet of sawlogs to the acre.

A Western Pine tree farmer built a three-bedroom house for his family from lumber sawed out of logs harvested from his 20-acre woodlot. Now, three years later, the woodlot is ready for another thinning that will yield a cash crop of wood.

A Lake States tree farmer has harvested \$4,800 worth of hardwood sawlogs off an 80-acre tract of second-growth timber. He expects continued harvests at five-year intervals. The timber stand on the woodlot is in better condition today than when selective cutting began.

A Northeastern tree farmer has averaged \$750 per year for the past 14 years from sales of sawlogs, pulpwood and fuel off his 150-acre woodlot. One year's production of sawlogs from the farm

provided sufficient lumber to build a new barn. A typical year's harvest includes 30 cords of fuel, 11 cords of pulpwood and 10,000 board feet of fine sawlogs.

A West Coast tree farmer and dairyman has had three sawlog harvests in eight years off a 30-acre tract of Douglas fir. The trees were cut according to a management plan. The first harvest in

1944 provided 9,000 board feet of lumber for farm buildings. Three years later the tree farmer harvested 42,000 board feet that provided lumber for a barn and two silos. A third harvest of 55,000 board feet has been made since that time. A vigorous stand of high quality trees now growing on the land assures plenty of wood for future harvests.

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