

## Collecting Economic Data in Forestry

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*Are there really forestry experts who are more concerned with data than with trees? Absolutely, and 35 of them from four continents met in Freiburg, Germany, on 24 and 25 November 2008, to discuss the collection, calculation and application of economic data in forestry. They attended the international workshop on "Figures for Forests" hosted by IUFRO 3.08.00 "Small-scale forestry" (<http://www.iufro.org/science/divisions/division-3/30000/30800/>) and the Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF) and organized by the Baden-Wuerttemberg Forest Research Institute (FVA).*



Group photo taken by Eva Meier  
(FVA Baden-Wuerttemberg)

The purpose of the workshop was to bring together key researchers to present their experiences and the current state of knowledge with particular regard to recent advances in new approaches and technologies concerning data collection, processing and presentation. It also aimed at promoting the exchange between scientists, operators and users of these data systems. Successful solutions to different problems were presented and discussed.

It was obvious to the participants that goals and visions were necessary and important for forests of the future. However, in order to sensibly and sustainably manage a forest, silvicultural and economic facts and figures are needed as a basis and tool for those who discuss, argue and decide the conditions and measures to be taken in a forest. So the workshop focused on the questions: Which analyses are meaningful, how are they calculated and in which contexts can they be applied?

Issues discussed included categorizing forest owner collectives, different data collection methods, the survey of multidimensional data as well as examples from the application of monitoring data analyses for documentation, forecasts and political agendas. Numerous case studies were presented and questions on harmonizing different national monitoring networks were also on the agenda. In addition, a partly connected online database system allowed a discussion of actual data processing and application from an accountancy network.

During a post-workshop tour in the Black Forest region the participants learned about the interaction between forestry and wood industry taking a member of the regional accountancy network as an example.

What opportunities did the meeting open up? It showed clearly that despite different national backgrounds, the problems of data management and interpretation were similar everywhere. However, the development of forestry management networks in individual countries is very different. It became obvious that a comparability of data from different networks was only possible following harmonization. First steps in this direction were taken during the workshop. The experts agreed to hold further meetings of this kind, and the Bavarian State Institute of Forestry in Freising, Germany, will most probably organize the next workshop in 2010.