



5 February 2014



SENT TO LSU AGCENTER/LOUISIANA FOREST PRODUCTS DEVELOPMENT CENTER - FOREST SECTOR / FORESTY PRODUCTS INTEREST GROUP

Louisiana: New Technologies Could Mean Profit for Forest Landowners

WEST MONROE, LA – New words like wood pellets and biomass are providing a ray of hope for forest landowners who have seen nothing but low prices since the downturn in the economy. Producers who attended the LSU AgCenter Forestry Forum in West Monroe on January 17th heard from a range of forestry professionals and received more positive news than in the past five years. Topics at the meeting included the pros and cons of using different out-planting containers, plant productivity under a changing climate, short-rotation hardwood management for traditional and alternative forest products, current legislative issues and sustainable forestry initiatives. LSU AgCenter forestry specialist Steven Hotard, who coordinates the annual meeting in conjunction with AgExpo, said new technologies will help growers who are used to waiting years in order to receive a payday on their crop. "Growers know when they plant trees that it is a long-term process," Hotard said. "With pine you can start cutting pulpwood at age 10, but for hardwood it's a little longer. You're looking at about 40 years before you will have pretty good-sized saw logs."

LSU AgCenter forest researcher Michael Blazier told growers about alternative trees they could grow and see profits more quickly than with the traditional pine trees. "We are currently doing research on alternative hardwoods that can provide profit to growers in a relatively short time period," Blazier said. One of the trees is eucalyptus, which is suitable for paper. "If you look globally, 90 percent of the paper products that are made with hardwood have eucalyptus in them," Blazier said.

Another bright spot for growers is the demand for southern pine and hardwood to produce wood pellets that will be exported to Europe to generate electricity. Buck Vandersteen, executive director of the Louisiana Forestry Association, gave a legislative update from the national and state levels.

On the national level, important legislative effort continues to allow forest landowners to use best management practices without fear of regulation from the Environmental Protection Agency, Vandersteen said.

On the state level, Vandersteen discussed Drax Biomass, the electric generating industry in the United Kingdom. "They have decided to look at Louisiana as a source of wood that they can turn into a high-valued product they can use in energy production called wood pellets." Louisiana Tech plant science professor Paul Jackson discussed the benefits of using containers to grow seedlings versus bare-root seedlings. He said the two main advantages are a better chance of the root plug being intact at planting time and a longer planting window. LSU AgCenter forestry professor Todd Shupe discussed some of the research that's being done at the AgCenter. One project involves chromated copper arsenate, which formerly was used to treat wood and for residential projects, but is now only used in commercial applications such as for light poles. Michael Tyree, a Louisiana Tech University forestry professor, said the climate in the near future will become hotter and drier, which will have an effect on growers.

LSU AgCenter forest products professor Richard Vlosky gave an overview of the forest sector in Louisiana. America has a "relief valve" when it comes to exporting forest products, Vlosky said. He explained how American growers can be major players in Europe.

"Forest landowners now have the opportunity to sell their product to multiple markets," he said. "The variety of demand sectors is increasing with the advent of biomass, biofuels and pellets."



5 February 2014



SENT TO LSU AGCENTER/LOUISIANA FOREST PRODUCTS DEVELOPMENT CENTER - FOREST SECTOR / FORESTY PRODUCTS INTEREST GROUP

Vlosky said these are new and hot areas for small-diameter wood that may have gone into pulpwood or as chips for composite panels.

© 2000 - 2014 WorldNow and KNOE
Content Provider: KNOE.com

Richard P. Vlosky, Ph.D.
Director Louisiana Forest Products Development Center
Crosby Land & Resources Endowed Professor of Forest Sector Business Development
Room 227, School of Renewable Natural Resources
Louisiana State University
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
Phone (office): (225) 578-4527
Fax: (225) 578-4251
Mobile Phone: (225) 223-1931

