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TREE FARM BULLETIN, April 2008

Greetings,

On a subject a long way from the forests of New Mexico word comes from the National Tree Farm office in Washington D.C. that the House and Senate cannot agree on a final version of the 2007 Farm Bill. This is after two thirty day extensions. Every five years Congress passes a Farm bill to govern spending for a multitude of agricultural programs; including crop support payments, crop insurance, other commodity programs and even the school lunch program. Why does this matter to Tree Farmers in New Mexico?

Many Tree Farmers in New Mexico have taken advantage of various cost-share programs offered to thin or do other improvements to their forest. Funding for many of these programs has now been consolidated into the Farm Bill and there are more provisions in the 2007 Farm Bill to earmark funds for projects on private forests than ever before. This is a result of people beginning to recognize the importance of private forests in protecting our natural resources. This support is encouraging.

Unfortunately until Congress can agree on a 2007 bill legislation passed over 50 years ago may go into effect which did not include provisions for forest landowners. Cost share programs designed as an incentive for the private forest landowner to improve their forest are now in limbo.

The Tree Farm national office is asking Tree Farmers to take a minute and call the United States Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121. Ask the operator to connect you directly with your congressional office. Urge them to agree to new funding levels for the Farm Bill. The work is never done in the woods and cost share funds can help.

HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT TREES?

How big were those first trees? The trunks averaged two feet in diameter and the trees were about 40 feet tall.

What are the responsibilities of the Forest Service? To administer the National Forests; to do research to determine the best kinds of trees for reforestation in the various National Forest regions; and to cooperate with state and private forest projects in promoting forest protection and good cutting practices.

What makes landscape trees appealing? (1) Beauty of foliage, flower, and fruit; with special emphasis on those plants that are outstanding at more than one season of the year. (2) Tolerance of a wide range of climates and soils. (3) Ease of growth. (4) Relative freedom from pests and diseases. (5) Adaptability to various uses in garden or landscape. (6) Availability from nurseries or obtainable through special sources.

What is the most valuable tree product? The wood of the trunk is the most useful of all natural substances, but important products come from all parts of the tree.

How are tree pests and diseases prevented? By knowledge of the disease and the means of spread. Direct-control methods include the use of sprays, dusts and soil treatments; the removal and destruction of diseased trees or parts; removal of alternate hosts and vectors.

Do the sieve tubes later turn into wood? No, all wood is made on the inner face of the cambium sheath, and all food-conveying cells are on the outside face. Six to eight times more wood cells than sieve-tube cells are added each growing season. Thus the truck is built mostly of wood. The food cells are active only for about a year, and then their places are taken by freshly made sieve tubes. The old ones lose their protoplasm, and being soft, they are crushed by the force of the expanding wood and lost sight of.

Platt, Rutherford 1992. 1001 Questions Answered About Trees. Dover Books. 318pp.

