

Forests-"lungs" of nature or "heart" of economics?

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This theme is important for writing of an article, because of acceptance of „Forest code" on February, 8, 2006 by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. Signing of the Code by the President has some advantages and disadvantages. One of the positive aspects of the Code is the creation of state forest guard which will have the status of law enforcement authority. It is the first step in the struggle against the illegal felling of forests (only during the last year the illegally felling of 84 thousand cubic. m of forests was registered; equivalent to UAH 25,2 mln.). The reduction of felling will support the average annual increase of the Ukrainian forests, that now makes 40 mln.cubic.m. If we transform these numbers to timber, we will get not less than 25 mln.cubic.m wood per year (not taking into account forest reserves) or \$1,5 billion (1 cubic.m wood costs UAH 300).

On the other hand the problem of forest property arises: any resident of Ukraine will be able to acquire up to 5 hectare of forests and dispose of them. It means that firstly, the forest property will be concentrated in the hands of a few financial and industrial groups. Secondly, the ownership by foreign citizens through “false residents” and as a result strategic influence on the state is highly probable.

The incorrect redistribution of budgetary facilities is the basic mistake. In our opinion, forests that execute nature protection functions should have priority financing, because forest’s cover 14-15% of all the area of Ukraine, instead of optimal nature protection norm - 20-22%.

Acceptance of the given Code will not solve basic ecological problems:

- „black storms” in Crimea;
- mudflows;
- dust content;
- noise.

The possible ways of solving these ecological problems are:

- expansion of fast growing and valuable species of trees;
- growing of forests by a planting method;
- providing nature protection measures that will save forests.

Let us pay attention that forest is the only natural resource (compared to petroleum, gas, coal) which recommences. A forest complex in Ukraine is formed in conditions of the small bringing and insufficient supplies of forest resources (own necessities are provided up to 20- 25%) in. This happens in the country wonderfully provided with climatic conditions and soils for growing valuable species of trees - oak, beech.

Economic problems of forestry:

- export of valuable species of trees at a low price;
- insufficient development of contiguous and supporting industries;
- import of finished wooden products of the forest complex.

We offer several solutions of the above mentioned problems:

- setting a duty on the export of raw materials of the forest complex;
- separating forestry from forest industry;
- development of the process of wood elaborating;
- introduction of a forest (landed) tax (as in Poland).

In this article the influence of changing the forests ownership form on the ecological and economical problems solution is considered.