Forests and Forestry Topics for FY2020

Topic 1: 10th Anniversary of Act for Promotion of Use of Wood in Public Buildings

Ten years have passed since the Act for Promotion of Use of Wood in Public Buildings was enacted and enforced in 2010.

Over the last decade, the percentage of wooden construction of public buildings has increased, especially for low-rise public buildings.

With the technological progress of fire-resistant wooden materials and the rationalization of the the building standard, the momentum to use wood in private buildings has also increased, and mid-to-high-rise wooden buildings have started to be constructed.

Various companies and organizations have established networks to expand wood use in the private sector.

Shirataka Town Complex Facility
(Yamagata Prefecture)
(Prime Minister's Award in “Reiwa 2nd Year the Excellent Wood-Using Facility Contest”)

The Hanno Chamber of Commerce and Industry
(Saitama Prefecture)
(Japan Wood Design Award 2020)

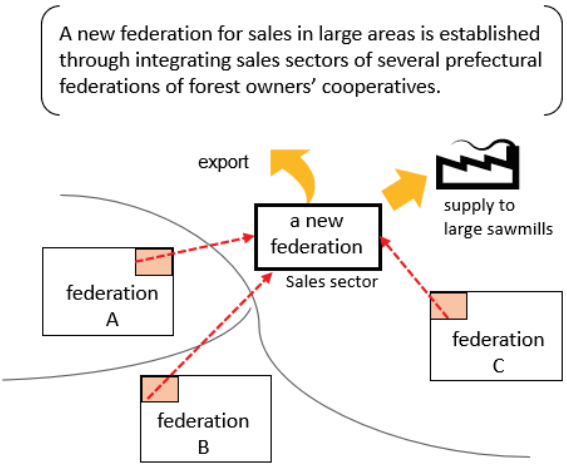
Topic 2: Revision of Forest Owners' Cooperative Associations Act aiming to Strengthen the Management Base of Forest Owner’s Cooperatives

Forest owner’s cooperatives, the main players in foresty are expected to promote sustainable forest management in each region through the forest management system and timber sales. On the other hand, some cooperatives need to strengthen their management base.

In May 2020, in order to strengthen the management base of the cooperatives and improve the management efficiency, the Forest Owners' Cooperative Associations Act was revised (enforced on April 1st, 2021) with the following three main matters.

1. Introducing various cooperation methods among cooperatives
2. Expanding the scope of the qualification for regular membership
3. Strengthening the business execution system

It is expected that cooperatives will revitalize forest and forestry by promoting these matters and the efficiency of operations.



Example of cooperation methods among cooperatives

Topic 3: Initiatives based on Forest Environment Transfer Tax

In September 2019, the distribution of the Forest Environment Transfer Tax to local governments started. Municipalities have utilized it for various initiatives.

In FY2019, half of the municipalities carried out forest management such as intention surveys of forest owners (conducted in 125,000 ha) and thinning (conducted in 3,600 ha).

In addition, some municipalities have launched other initiatives such as training of forestry engineers and forest volunteers, depending on their conditions. About 6,500 people nationwide participated in various trainings and courses.
In urban areas, municipalities conducted forest environmental education and other activities in collaboration with other municipalities which own forests.

Forest conducted thinning

Afforestation activities in collaboration with urban areas and mountainous areas

Topic 4: Improvement of Smart Forestry through Developing Machineries utilizing Cutting-edge Technologies

Cutting-edge technologies are adopted to smart forestry, which is expected to reduce labor load, improve productivity, and ensure worker safety.

Riding forestry machineries that can be used for ground preparation and weeding even on slopes of 30 ° have been developed and commercialized. Drones are widely utilized in forestry such as transportation of seedlings. Remote cable-yarding systems will be commercialezed soon, and automatic systems by AI are under development.
In addition, some municipalities are striving to build communication networks in forests with LPWA (Low Power Wide Area) for safety of forestry workers.

Weeding by riding forestry machinery

LPWA handset

Relay device

Automatic cable-yarding systems using AI image analysis technology

Topic 5: Responses to Mountainous Disasters from Torrential Rains in July 2020

Torrential rains in July 2020 hurt 43 prefectures mainly in the Kyushu region, resulting in forest damage totaling about 97 billion yen.

The Forestry Agency dispatches technical staff (MAFF-SAT) to grasp the damage and provide technical support for the disaster recovery. Futhermore, the Forestry Agency investigated these damaged areas through helicopter surveys and aerial laser measurements, and provided the information to the affected prefectures.

In the Ashikita district of Kumamoto Prefecture, which was particularly severely damaged, the restoration project for forest land and disaster control facilities was carried out by the Kyushu Regional Forest Office on behalf of the prefecture.

The forest disaster in Ashikita district

Topic 6: Restoration of Coastal Forests Damaged by the Great East Japan Earthquake

Ten years have passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake occurred. In most of the coastal disaster-prevention forests damaged by the tsunami, planting of seedlings had been completed by the end of FY2020 with the cooperation of local residents, NPOs and companies.

The coastal disaster-prevention forests along Sendai Bay were particularly severely damaged. The Tohoku Regional Forest Office had restored both national and private forests in this area. Since the restoration project was completed at the end of FY2020, Miyagi Prefecture has started to manage the growth of the private forests.
Projects for growing the seedlings will be continued in order to fully enhance a disaster prevention function of the coastal disaster-prevention forests.

Just after the tsunami
(March 2011)
(©Tohoku Community Development Association)

After planting of seedlings was completed
(October 2020)

Costal disaster-prevention forests along Sendai Bay