



Munich Trade Show focusses on Technology & Digitalisation



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INTERFORST is held once every four years and is a major internationally recognised event for the latest forestry machinery and technology. The dominating topic at INTERFORST 2018, both for the big machine manufacturers and at the Conference and various talks was ongoing digitalisation and the use of technology in the forest. Many of the talks at the Conference and Forum focussed on digitalisation and on how we can potentially use the data currently available to us within the wider industry. The technology and digitalisation presentations emphasised that we, as an industry, are under-utilising the data we gather from on-board computers on harvesters and other forestry equipment. The need to collate and share data for further analysis to help improve communications within the supply chain was a recurring theme throughout the presentations and the Conference and Forum supported the machinery and technology on display and demonstrated at INTERFORST. On board computers on harvesters, which record data and automatically import into the accounting system as well as many software solutions for smarter and more efficient recording and measuring of timber were on display.

The **Einride T-log** autonomous logging truck, a fully electric and autonomous logging truck was mentioned at a number of the talks as the future of timber haulage. Not only does it have driverless capabilities, the driver's com-

partment has been removed altogether. This truck is being tested at present and is likely to be on the market in 2020.

There were also a number of stands at INTERFORST 2018 demonstrating the possibilities of remote control within the timber harvesting and haulage sector.

Another reason for increased focus on technology is the projected decline in Germany in the available forestry work force by 2030 at which time a 15% shortage of forestry workers is projected. Currently over 35% of the German forestry work force is over 50 years of age. This also linked in with the Fit for Forestry talk, which outlined that nearly 50% of all reported accidents in forestry are stumbles and falls. This figure can be improved on by increased fitness, not just of the older work force, but also of the younger generation, who according to evidence outlined at the talk, are not as fit as their counterparts a few decades ago, which is attributed to the so called 'Smart-age'. Simple exercises to improve balance and co-ordination can be incorporated



into team-building exercises and be made fun for the work force while at the same time improve fitness and reduce work accidents. Slacklining was one of the exercises suggested to improve balance and co-ordination.

There were a number of health and safety talks and demonstrations throughout the 5-day INTERFORST show and, reading between the lines, compliance with forest certification would undoubtedly be a contributing factor for the increased focus and efforts being made with regards to health and safety practices. The goal of NIL forestry accidents was repeated like a mantra, with only one



speaker admitting that this may not be realistic. There was also a focus on the need for a workforce attitude change which would lead to better workforce safety, with an emphasis on leading by example from the top. 'Safety should be a way of life not just something you do at work'.

There were also talks and demonstrations on the use of drones in forestry and how they can be used to achieve a

detailed inventory of the forest down to single tree GPS addresses, which can then be used to monitor individual tree growth at regular intervals or monitor for distress due to pests or diseases.

The role of forestry in the bioeconomy was another topic discussed at the Conference and Forum talks. Unlike Ireland, there is not much potential to increase the forest estate in Germany, a potential maximum figure of 2% increase was mentioned. There is some potential for more agroforestry, but the main focus of the bioeconomy talks was on better use of forestry residue and recycling / reuse of timber products.

An impressive fact was that there was a strong show of support for the forest industry by politicians throughout the 5-day event. Michaela Kaniber, Bavarian State Minister of Food, Agriculture and Forestry, dedicated almost two entire days to INTERFORST, with a number of other political VIPs attending throughout the event.

The trade show was also used as a work outing for the Bavarian State Forest Enterprise, with more than 2,000 staff members attending the show on the second day all dressed in blue T-shirts in an impressive show of co-operation and co-ordination. "INTERFORST was exactly the right framework for our Employee Day", Martin Neumeyer, Chairman of the Board of Management of the Bavarian State Forest Enterprise informed us.