

## **The Storm in Sweden and measures taken by the Swedish forest administration**

The storm that hit Southern Sweden on the night of January 8<sup>th</sup> caused the worst storm damage to the forests ever to our knowledge. The first estimation by The Swedish Forest Administration is that approximately 75 million cubic metres were wind thrown or damaged. This corresponds to nearly an entire year's cutting for the whole of Sweden. Approximately 80% of the damaged trees are Norway spruce, 15% are Scots pine and the remaining are deciduous trees.

### **Measures taken by the Swedish forest administration**

The Swedish Forest Administration has, in the initial stage, focussed primarily on informing forest owners and the public of the dangers of being and working in storm felled forests. On January 11<sup>th</sup>, The National Board of Forestry requested an extra grant from the government of 18 million SEK (approximately 2 million €) for information, education campaigns and aerial inventory of the storm damage. In the long term, extra efforts will also be required for work involving forest protection against insects and other hazards to the forest, and regeneration.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> of January, The National Board of Forestry invited representatives of the forest owners, the forest industry, authorities and environmental organisations to an extended national council to review the situation and agree on a concerted action plan. The forest industries have shown a great readiness to co-operate, and harvesting capacity is currently being transferred from the north of Sweden to the damaged areas in the south. Swedish forest companies are also trying to pool resources from neighbouring countries. Some foreign entrepreneurs are already on their way.

### **Current issues**

The Swedish Forest Administration is still in the process of trying to estimate the extent of the damage. An aerial inventory by plane will take place during week 3 and 4. Based on this inventory and additional analyses, a more accurate estimation of the damages will be presented by the end of week 4 or 5. The National Board of Forestry has asked The International Charter on Space and Major Disasters to activate their satellites to provide satellite images which will aid in the damage estimation.

In spite of the effort from all parties to take care of the trees in the storm felled forest region, the Forest Administration expects that large volumes of trees will not be able to be removed from the forests until after summer. This places extra burden on already affected forest owners, who may suffer more financial losses due to damages caused by insects. For example, there is a risk that an extremely large population of the larger European spruce bark beetle (*Ips Typographus*) will attack the remaining and newly planted forests in the years to come, as was the case in the last big storm of 1969.

Timber logistics will also be difficult to handle. Due to the large quantities, there is no possibility to remove all timber by road, boat or train. Therefore, storage terminals may have to be prepared in the forest, in lakes and in the Baltic Sea.

Several government measures such as treatment for long-term storage, logistics, wood transportation and other possible supports are currently being discussed. The national forest protection committee, which is an advisory expert group for questions about forest damage, will meet shortly to lay down guiding principles for the upcoming forest protection work.

The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency has, together with the Swedish Chemicals Inspectorate, started an overview of the possibilities to facilitate exemptions for using insecticides to be prepared for a worst case scenario. The national forest protection committee is also involved in this work. Additionally, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency is conducting an overview of how to simplify the permission process for timber storage in terminals and water depots.

The National Board of Forestry has started to make a brief compilation of short and long term financial consequences for the forest sector and the Swedish Forest Administration is gathering forces to help in the evaluation of damage that is requested by the insurance companies.

**The Swedish Forest Administration consists of the National Board of Forestry and the Regional Forestry Boards.**

We are a governmental organisation working for sustainable utilisation of the Swedish forests according to the guidelines provided by the Parliament and the Government. The National Board of Forestry leads and co-ordinates the work of 10 Regional Forestry Boards. The National Board of Forestry is responsible for contacts with the parliament and the government and with other authorities and organisations on national and international levels. The Regional Forestry Boards are responsible for contacts with authorities and organisations on regional and local levels.