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Forest Products Sector Profile of South Korea

Gerard F. Schreuder, Richard P. Vlosky and Yeo Chang Youn. 1987

Introduction

Historically, South Korea has played a key role in global forest products trade. In the seventies for example, it was one of the world's greatest producers of plywood. Presently however, recent events have compromised this position. One of these has been the ban of log exports by Indonesia, once South Korea's primary source of supply for domestic plywood production.

Another factor concerns S. Korea's existing forest inventory. Much, if not all, of the timber of merchantable diameter was cut during World War II and to a lesser extent during the Korean War. This event, coupled with a post war intensive reforestation effort, has produced a nearly even aged composition of standing inventory of no more than 12 inches in diameter.

Questions concerning the implications of the country's forest products sector, domestic requirements and sources of supply have arisen. This paper will examine some of these issues and their effects on Korea and its position in global forest product trade flows.

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