

IMPROVING MINNESOTA'S TIMBERLANDS PRODUCTIVITY — LESSONS FROM OUR INTERNATIONAL COMPETITORS

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Historically the profitability and survival of the U.S. forest products industry has depended on competitive advantages of cost of capital, power costs, and access to low cost public and nonindustrial private timber supplies. In today's global economy, the future economic viability of the U.S. forest products industry will increasingly depend on its ability to grow competitively priced fiber.

Competing Southern Hemisphere plantation growers have sustained improvements in yield productivity of 1.5 to 2 percent per acre per annum for both conifer and hardwood crops. While improvements in the productivity of industrial timberlands in the southern U.S. have nearly matched these gains, productivity gains for timberlands in the northern Midwest and the Pacific Northwest in most cases fall behind these levels of improvement.

Southern hemisphere cold temperate plantation experience has demonstrated economically viable productivity gains which are appropriate for many of Minnesota's higher site index lands and drained, marginal farmlands through:

- The deployment through planting of genetically superior improved tree stocks.
 - Intensive spot cultivation to improve micro site drainage, spring soil temperature, organic matter decomposition and soil mineralization.
 - Vegetation control through to canopy closure.
 - Targeted and judicious application of macro- and micronutrients near the time of canopy closure.
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