



## **MOBILE WALDBAUERNSCHULE/ MOBILE FARM FORESTRY SCHOOL**

### **1. Organisations involved**

- Land- und Forstwirtschaftliche Berufsgenossenschaft Hessen, Rheinland-Pfalz, Saarland (German statutory accident insurance for agriculture and forestry, Hesse, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland)
- Landwirtschaftliche Sozialversicherung (agricultural social insurance)
- Landesforstverwaltungen (State forestry administration)
- Verband der Privatwaldbesitzer (Association of private forest owners)
- Hessen-Forst (Hesse-Forest)

### **2. Description of the case**

#### ***2.1. Introduction***

About one third of the forest in Hesse belongs to private owners. They are often farmers and the forest is just a part of their land. This means that, most of the time, the owner is not a trained or specialised forestry worker. A lot of these farms are family farms. Only a few of them have specially trained employees for the forestry work. The problem is that forestry work and all the tasks related to this work are extremely dangerous and have a high rate of accidents at work. Two of the main problems relating to accidents in private forests are that the workers are not wearing protective clothing and that they are not aware of the task-specific risks.

Training material and courses for untrained workers have existed for a while, however, the rate of participation has remained quite low. The reason seems to be, that the workers cannot leave their farm for the required time period since they cannot leave their animals unattended.

The costs of the accidents and the related injuries are very high. It was necessary to find a solution which enabled the farmers and their workers to participate in different training courses to reduce the risk of accidents. The "Odenwaldproject" studied projects from Lower Saxony and Denmark, which used mobile forestry schools and the concept of a mobile forestry school in the Odenwald (Hesse) was developed. An efficiency study by the University of Munich proved that the accident rate decreased after the start of the mobile training.

All courses include theoretical and practical training. The German statutory accident insurance for agriculture funds the courses for their members.

#### ***2.2. Aims***

The aims were to reduce the accidents in small private forests by giving more workers the opportunity to participate in training courses, which are designed to provide them with a better understanding of the risks associated with forest work and a greater sense of responsibility. It is hoped that every private forest owner within the Hesse area will have the opportunity to participate in a training course.

Since most of the owners of small private forests are also farmers, they are not able to leave their farm for a whole week or even a weekend. The solution was, to provide the course/training close to their forest/workplace.



### **2.3. What was done, and how?**

The project in Hesse started as a pilot study in the forest called “Odenwald” in 1989. It was initiated and developed based on a study of similar mobile forestry schools, which were already operating in Lower Saxony and Denmark. This study came to the conclusion that there were considerable benefits for training of small private forest owners to be carried out on-site<sup>1</sup>. This was the starting point for the “Mobile farm forestry school” in Hesse. The “Odenwaldproject” was accompanied by the University of Munich, chair in occupational health and safety in forestry and applied computer science (Lehrstuhl für forstliche Arbeitssicherheit und Angewandte Informatik). The University team was commissioned to run an efficiency study to find out whether or not the project was a success; this included research on how it was received by the forest owners (target group), how satisfied they were with the courses and to what extent the participants achieved the educational objective. In addition to this, the extent to which participants applied their newly acquired knowledge to their work was examined. This was measured by the work safety (accident statistics), the economical outcome (cost-benefit analysis), and the condition of the forest. The conclusion of these surveys was, that the accident rate decreased by 50% for accidents resulting in more than three day's inability to work and by 75% for accidents causing permanent physical injury. This provided confirmation that the Odenwald project was successful and that the training concept used could work in the future.

Today there are different kinds of training courses, the basis of which consists of basic and advanced training on how to use the motor saw. In addition to these two courses, the farmers can participate in training courses on topics including:

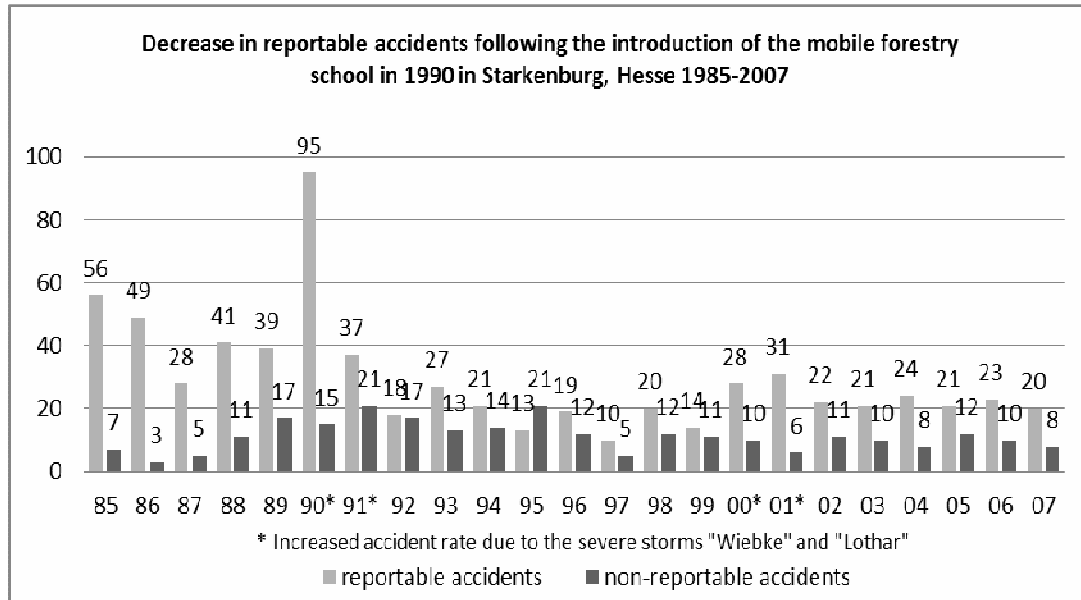
- Timber harvesting
- Forest cultivation
- Forest management
- Sustainable forest tree management

The Hesse-Forest receives a grant from the German statutory accident insurance for agriculture and forestry to cover the cost of the training for private forest owners, their family members who work for them or other workers in their forest. A small number of participants, who are not eligible for the grant and attend for reasons such as wanting to make their own firewood, have to pay a fee.

It is possible for the participants to obtain a certificate for forestry workers (Waldbauernbrief) if they participate in three specific classes on different topics within three years and pass a test at the end.

In these training courses, participants learn which protective clothing they have to wear and how to handle the motor saw – by not wearing the right clothing or by being grossly negligent, they run the risk of not getting money if they are injured in an accident.

**Figure 1. Forestry sector accident statistics for the period 1985-2007 (Source: [http://www.lsv.de/hrs/03unfallverhuetung/22Mobile\\_Waldbauernschule/Allgemeine Informationen.pdf](http://www.lsv.de/hrs/03unfallverhuetung/22Mobile_Waldbauernschule/Allgemeine_Informationen.pdf) p.2)**



## 2.4. What was achieved?

- A reduction in the number of accidents, especially the ones where too little protective clothing or experience were the cause. Since the introduction of the mobile forestry school, accidents decreased by about 25%
- It increased the number of participants to a satisfactory level - in the last couple of years the numbers of participants has been consistently around 2500 per annum
- Extension of the area / increasing the number of mobile stations, for example, a wagon for Rhineland-Palatinate in September 2007
- Reward for good safety-at-work for the forestry district Michelstadt in 2009
- Information on the topics, dates and costs of the training is provided on the website of the agricultural social insurance (LSV)

## 2.5. Success factors

The mobile forestry school is a profitable way to ensure that forestry owners and their workers have the opportunity to participate in training courses to get a better knowledge of the wide topic spectrum connected to the forest. The possibility to stay close to their own home or even have the training in their own forest enables more owners to participate. In addition to that, it is helpful that the participation is free of charge for the forest owners.

The possibility to participate in short-term training courses on special themes also helps to motivate the forest owners to participate in training on themes that are especially interesting for them and leave out others where, for example, they may already have sufficient knowledge.



Participating in the basic training courses and learning which protective clothing to wear and how to handle the motor saw in a secure way enables them to adopt good practice and so should prevent them from running the risk of being in breach of their conditions of insurance.

## **2.6. Further information**

For further information, contact Dietrich Bräuer at the Hesse-Forestry Administration in Kassel, Hesse.

HESSEN-FORST, Landesbetriebsleitung

Dietrich Bräuer

Bertha-von-Suttner-Str.3 , 34131 Kassel

Telephone: +49 (0) 561 3167 111

Email: [dietrich.braeuer@forst.hessen.de](mailto:dietrich.braeuer@forst.hessen.de)

## **2.7. Transferability**

The concept of a mobile forestry school is transferable to other countries. There are, however, certain conditions that should be considered. The concept is developed for unlearned forestry workers. It targets specific types of accident, which tend to be prevalent amongst inexperienced workers and so it is less useful in areas where only trained workers operate (e.g. big forests). One of the requirements is a mobile schooling bus and teachers who are willing and able to travel around in a specific area to train the farmers close to their workplace/home. Similar concepts already exist in other regions of Germany and also in Denmark.

## **3. References, resources:**

- Löffler, H. und Ohrner, G.; Steigerung der Arbeitssicherheit im Kleinprivatwald "Odenwaldprojekt", Schriften des Bundesministeriums für Ernährung, Landwirtschaft und Forsten, Reihe A: Angewandte Wissenschaft, Heft 437, Münster 1994, ISBN 3-7843-0437-0.

- Newspaper article on a good practice award of the Hesse forest, September 2010:

- <http://www.echo-online.de/suedhessen/odenwaldkreis/michelstadt/art1274,500744>

(accessed 28/10/10).

- Information on the website of the Hesse-Forest, September 2010:

- <http://www.hessen-forst.de/servicezentren/waldbauernschule.htm> (accessed 28/10/10).

- Specific information on the website of agricultural social insurance (LSV), September 2010:

- [http://www.lsv.de/hrs/03unfallverhuetung/22Mobile\\_Waldbauernschule/Hessen.pdf](http://www.lsv.de/hrs/03unfallverhuetung/22Mobile_Waldbauernschule/Hessen.pdf)

(accessed 28/10/10).

- General information on the website of agricultural social insurance (Landwirtschaftliche Sozialversicherung - LSV), September 2010:

- [http://www.lsv.de/hrs/03unfallverhuetung/22Mobile\\_Waldbauernschule/Allgemeine\\_Informationen.pdf](http://www.lsv.de/hrs/03unfallverhuetung/22Mobile_Waldbauernschule/Allgemeine_Informationen.pdf) (accessed 28/10/10).

- Press release (Hessen-Forst 08.12.2009) relating to the delivery of a brand new wagon for the forestry school in Diemelstadt, Hesse, September 2010:

- [http://www.hessen-forst.de/service/pressemitteilungen/pm\\_08.12.2009.htm](http://www.hessen-forst.de/service/pressemitteilungen/pm_08.12.2009.htm) (accessed

28/10/10)

- "Prevention Report 2010" of the agricultural social insurance (LSV):

- [http://www.lsv.de/hrs/03unfallverhuetung/Pr\\_ventionsbericht\\_2009/Pr\\_ventionsbericht\\_2010.pdf](http://www.lsv.de/hrs/03unfallverhuetung/Pr_ventionsbericht_2009/Pr_ventionsbericht_2010.pdf) (accessed 28/10/10).

- Personal communication with Dietrich Bräuer from the Hesse-Forest Administration (Hessen-Forst Landesbetriebsleitung), September 2010.