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Dictionary is definitive forestry document

A Dictionary of Forestry. 1998. J A Helms (ed).
Published by Society of American Foresters and CABI
Publishing, Wallingford, Oxford. 224pp.
ISBN 085199-308-7. £30 or US\$50.

This book is a revision of the well known 1971 *Terminology of Forest Science, Technology, Practice and Products* published by the Society of American Foresters and edited by F. C. Ford-Roberston. As a replacement for the earlier *Terminology* it is almost guaranteed to become a definitive dictionary in the English speaking countries. About 100 people contributed to the dictionary over a three-year period.

The dictionary, which has 4500 terms, has attempted to cover the whole of forest science. Because of this, there are definitions of words commonly used in forestry but which are more closely associated with topics like ecology, soils, range management, genetics, statistics, geographic information systems etc. For example, the dictionary defines greenhouse effect, island biogeography, humin, soil order, split-plot design, regression, and so forth. However, the dictionary does not attempt to have a complete coverage of terms found in these other disciplines. Nor does it provide taxonomic details or classification systems for forest species. Where appropriate synonyms and antonyms are given are given as well as no obsolete terms.

It is interesting to see that diameter at breast height is defined as being measured at 4.5 ft or 1.37 m and the alternative heights at which some countries measure dbh are not mentioned. Top height is defined as the average height of the 40 trees/ac (100 trees/ha) of largest diameter but predominant mean height is not mentioned. Nor are there definitions for clearwood, diameter over stubs or defect core; the commonly used New Zealand measures of sweep, branch index, internode index etc are omitted. Because of this, New Zealand users need to be aware that the book may not meet all their requirements.

Similarly, there is an obvious United States bias. Thus the American soil taxonomy predominates and there are terms such as habitat conservation plant (HCP) which refer to the Secretary of the Interior. Silviculturists will find the classic regeneration methods (clearcutting, seed tree, shelterwood, selection etc) clearly defined. Selective cutting (but not selection logging) is defined and it is emphasised that this not to be confused with the selection method. It is good to see this as there is often confusion in the popular press.

Despite some of the limitation mentioned, New Zealand-based foresters need to be aware of this new dictionary and may find it a useful reference from time-to-time as they attempt to communicate with clarity and consistency. It is certainly a book for libraries, including those of the larger forestry or forest-consulting companies.

Don J Mead