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Regeneration felling

Regeneration felling is also known as final felling. It is the part of forestry when the greater part of a forest stand is felled where most of the trees are fully grown.

The fruits of many years of management and growth are thus gleaned in regeneration felling. In central and southern Sweden it takes 45-70 years for forest to be ready for felling. In the northern part of the country it can take up to 100-120 years due to the colder climate, resulting in slower growth.

As the name suggests, regeneration felling is a step towards creating a new generation of forest. How regeneration is to take place has a great bearing on planning. Factors taken into account range from what tree species the new forest is to contain to ground conditions or whether future climate change can be anticipated.

Felling forest in this way and reforesting, planning or sowing is known as clear-cutting forestry. It is the dominant method of forestry in Sweden and also the most effective. The method is efficient and proven, results in a high level of production and has a good economic outcome.

Regeneration felling is the action that produces the highest level of income from forestry. The trees have been growing for a long time and are tall and thick. It is therefore essential to extract high value from them when they are felled, and also fell them as cost-effectively as possible. The assortment, or the product, it is preferable to obtain for economic reasons is thick logs, timber. Other assortments are smaller-diameter trees and tops of the thicker trees which become pulpwood. Branches and trees of even smaller diameter are utilised and become forest fuel.

In purely practical terms, almost all felling is done using ultra-modern forestry machines known as harvesters. The harvesters fell, delimb and cross-cut (cut to length) at high speed and can process more than 100 trees in one hour.

At the same time, regeneration felling is a major intervention in a forest that has been growing for a long time. It is therefore important that the felling is also carried out correctly with respect to water and natural and cultural amenities.

Planning prior to felling is important, both to optimise consideration of such amenities and for the economic outcome. Good planning means that the felling teams have a firm base on which to work as efficiently as possible, but also to minimise damage to trees and the ground. Felling tasks are also followed up to evaluate and learn for the future, and consequently bring about forestry that works even better.

