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Press release

Key topic: healthy forest of the future

Prospects for the forests of tomorrow

- **Healthy forest of the future in response to climate change**
- **Digitalization and high-tech solutions for modern forestry**
- **Forestry and timber industry – closely interlinked**

Our forests face special challenges amid climate change. A healthy forest of the future is able to adapt to changing environmental influences and fulfill its ecological, economic and social function: Forests should be used for relaxation, provide wood and other natural products, be a habitat for animals, plants and mushrooms, and enjoy healthy growth and thrive as carbon reservoirs. This requires active forest management, long-term planning, and intelligent use of wood. From October 15 to 18, 2026, INTERFORST—the leading international trade fair for forestry and forest technology—will showcase practical and innovative solutions for sustainable forest management at Messe München.

The annual Forest Condition Survey records the crown condition and thus the health of German forests in random samples. It enables identification of changes and risks at an early stage, and facilitates well-founded decision-making to protect forests. The Forest Condition Survey 2024 shows that four out of five trees in Germany are damaged, especially spruce, pine, beech and oak. Crown thinning, the visible loss of leaves and needles, are evidence of the worrying health of forests.

Healthy forest of the future in times of climate change

The goal is a healthy forest that can fulfill its useful, protective and recreational functions. Forests provide habitat, store carbon, protect both water supplies and the soil, and provide wood, a renewable raw material. Sustainable forest

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management and the targeted conversion to climate-resilient mixed forests create forests that are resistant to climate change, pests, and extreme weather.

It's important to have a variety of tree species that can cope with local site conditions, as well as genetic diversity, and different age groups and structures. However, there is no general answer to the question as to which tree species will be climate-resilient. The Future Forest Brandenburg project run by the forestry association "Die Märkischen" and the Brandenburg State Forestry Office contributes to identifying sustainable tree species, for example. A total of 50,000 trees, including Corsican pine, Turkish fir, Atlas cedar, Sweet chestnut, and Turkish hazel, will be planted and monitored over an area of 13 hectares.

Active forest management, reforestation, and biodiversity form the basis for the ecological stability of the forest. Modern forestry technology enables efficient and safe management that aims at protecting both existing resources and the soil. An intact forest ecosystem is ecologically resilient, economically viable, and valuable for society. Even under changing conditions, healthy forests of the future remain adaptable and productive for future generations.

The dedicated work of forest owners, foresters, and forestry contractors is crucial to successfully equip the forest to tackle climate change. "Sustainable forest management for the production of wood as a renewable raw material and for the provision of other ecosystem services remains a major challenge for all forest owners in the face of climate change," says Prof. Andreas Bitter, President of AGDW-Die Waldeigentümer. Against this backdrop, he notes, professional exchange regarding new concepts, methods, and practical experiences is all the more important. Andreas Bitter adds: "INTERFORST, as a forum for innovation, offers an excellent platform for this. We especially invite the members of our state forest owners' associations to take advantage of this opportunity for networking, knowledge transfer, and new ideas for forest management."

Digitalization and high-tech solutions for a healthy forest of the future

Forward-looking, long-term forest management is necessary due to the long rotations in forests—the time from planting to harvesting a tree. Forest owners, foresters, and forestry contractors use a variety of digital applications and highly developed forestry technology for their daily work in the forest. This enables them to make well-founded, data-based decisions, making the recording, planning, and management of forest areas more efficient, transparent, and resource-friendly.

In view of the rapidly changing environmental conditions and the increasing demands on forests, the United Nations' The State of the World's Forests 2024 report also calls for more innovation in the forestry sector. "Innovations not only strengthen the competitiveness of our forestry companies, but are also the basis for sustainable timber production, they secure jobs in rural areas, and make a decisive contribution to adapting our forests to climate change", explains Christian Haase, President of the German Forestry Council. "As an umbrella organization, we represent the interests of around two million private and municipal forest owners in Germany. I very much look forward to discussing the current developments and future prospects of our industry in the opening talk at INTERFORST."

Forestry and timber industry – closely interlinked

Healthy forests of the future ensure a sustainable wood supply. Wood is a climate-friendly raw material that stores carbon from the atmosphere in the long term. Compared to fossil fuels and recyclable materials, such as concrete, steel, or plastic, wood is ecologically valuable and requires less energy to produce. Wood is used in many different ways as a product (e.g. building material, furniture, musical instruments) or as a source of energy.

The aim is to achieve a circular economy in which wood is used as efficiently as possible through reuse and avoiding waste. In cascading use, the valuable log is used for the construction and furniture industry. This is followed by several recycling steps that keep the wood in use for as long as possible until it is finally

used for energy production. The forestry and timber industry, with its various players, therefore lives what other sectors strive: It's a genuine circular model.

"As a leading trade fair for the Central European region, INTERFORST offers a comprehensive overview of the market and presents innovations and trends relating to the healthy forest of the future—from forest establishment and management to wood processing," says Exhibition Director Petra Westphal, summing up. Many exhibitors from Germany and abroad will be showcasing pioneering innovations: digital applications, drone technology, LiDAR-supported data acquisition, intelligent sensor technology, AI-based analyses, and robotic and autonomous solutions. In the compact machinery segment, Uniforest, EiFo Forsttechnik and Köppl, among others, will be presenting their innovative solutions for modern forestry. In the heavy machinery segment, well-known manufacturers such as Log Max, Haas Nutzfahrzeuge and Waldburg Forstmaschinen will be represented at INTERFORST.
With SYSTEMS & COMPONENTS Forestry by DLG in Hall B6, INTERFORST is adding modern systems and advanced components that increase efficiency, sustainability and performance in forestry technology to its portfolio. This provides clear added value for B2B visitors as well as OEM designers and developers: compact insights into available technologies, better networking and faster innovation processes—all in one place.

Focus on healthy forests of the future in the forum and congress program
At the INTERFORST forum, the "Climate-positive forestry" working group will give a lecture on the topic of "Forest ambassadors – forest of the future". The Bavarian State Institute for Forests and Forestry will also be at the forum showcasing the second volume of the practical guide "Klima - Boden - Baumartenwahl" (Climate - Soil - Tree Species Selection). At the congress, Dr. Joachim Hamberger, Head of the Bavarian Office for Forest Genetics, will speak about "Solutions for climate-stable forests of the future". Dr. Ferdinand von Plettenberg, Project Manager at wpd onshore, will also present "New sources of income for forestry operations (wind energy in forests)".

Tickets for INTERFORST will be available from April.

Further information: interforst.com

About INTERFORST
Every four years, INTERFORST, as one of the leading international trade fairs for forestry and forest technology, presents the entire value chain from afforestation and timber harvesting to the sawmill. Another focus is on the energetic use of wood. A comprehensive supporting program with a congress and various forums as well as special shows brings together practice, science and politics.

Messe München
As one of the world's leading trade fair organizers, Messe München presents the world of tomorrow at its around 90 international trade fairs. Its portfolio comprises trade fairs for capital and consumer goods, as well as for new technologies. These include 14 of the world's leading trade fairs such as bauma, BAU, IFAT and electronica, cooperative events such as the IAA MOBILITY, and numerous guest events. With an international network of affiliated companies and foreign representatives, Messe München is active worldwide. Together with its around 1,200 employees in the group, it organizes trade fairs in China, India, Brazil, South Africa, Turkey, Singapore, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Thailand, the U.S., and Saudi Arabia. Around 150 events held annually attract more than 50,000 exhibitors and around three million visitors in Germany and abroad. That makes Messe München an important economic driver, triggering purchasing power effects in the billions.