

Munich, July 28, 2026

Press release

Key topic: Digitalization of forestry and wood

Digitalization as the key to future-oriented forestry

- Modern forest management – data-driven, connected, and increasingly automated
- Digital technologies support forest protection, monitoring, and sustainable management
- Early detection of disasters and the effects of climate change through data, sensors, and artificial intelligence

Digitalization is becoming a key to future-oriented forestry. Forest 4.0 stands for connected, data-driven, and increasingly automated processes—from monitoring to forest protection, and timber harvesting to logistics. INTERFORST – the leading international trade fair for forestry and forestry technology – will showcase in Munich from October 15 to 18, 2026 which digital tools can already be put into practice.

Results from the 2025 Forest Condition Survey conducted by the German Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Regional Identity (BMLEH) show that Germany's forests are in a precarious state. The vitality measurements show that 80 percent of trees exhibit mild to severe damage. This is also confirmed by the Fourth German National Forest Inventory, coordinated by the Thünen Institute for Forest Ecosystems. Both forest monitoring systems assess the forest condition using terrain surveys, geoinformation systems (GIS), satellite data, and remote sensing.

Data is becoming the new basis for decision-making in forestry

Active forest management in the face of climate change requires up-to-date and reliable forest data as a basis for informed decisions, forward-looking planning, and sustainable adaptation. Forestry companies need to detect damage caused by pests, storms, or forest fires early on and respond quickly. In addition to

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experience and forestry expertise, GIS applications, remote sensing, sensor technology, and AI provide an important basis for a status analysis, risk assessment, and planning measures.

Forest 4.0 combines forestry and wood value creation

However, Forest 4.0 describes so much more than just recording and managing forest stands. Digitalization processes cover the entire forestry value chain – from planning and management through timber harvesting, log stack measurement, and logistics to billing, documentation, and verification of sustainability and timber origin. Their added value lies in particular in greater transparency, more efficient processes, and improved networking of all the players involved.

Marcus Kühling, Group Leader of Forest, Timber and Building, at the Agency for Renewable Resources (FNR), explains: “Digitalization makes complex changes in the forest easier to understand and manage. The key is to make data available and usable along the value chain – from logistics to processing. With the ‘Digitalization of Forestry & Wood’ roundtable, we are providing a platform that facilitates close collaboration among stakeholders.”

AI in the forest: From data management to decision-making

AI enables the efficient analysis of these ever-increasing volumes of data from satellite and drone imagery, sensors, and forestry machinery. Among the most important areas of application are the automatic identification of tree species and forest damage, monitoring of bark beetle infestation and drought stress, preparation of risk forecasts, and decision support for forest conversion and timber harvesting. AI does not replace forestry expertise, but instead complements it through faster analysis.

“AI can help us better understand complex relationships within forest ecosystems and make informed decisions. The key here is handling data in a trustworthy manner: Data rooms, data custodians, and data hubs enable networking while also protecting data sovereignty,” explains Frank Heinze,

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manager of the Forest and Wood 4.0 Competence Center at the RIF Institute for Research and Transfer e. V.

Digital machinery and fleet data creates efficiency

Today, modern forestry machines collect a wide range of operating, site, service, and performance data. This information enables predictive maintenance planning, reduces machinery downtime, improves deployment planning, and ensures transparent wood provision. Digitalization has therefore long been an integral part of modern forestry technology – and it is precisely this connection between smart technology and digital data management that visitors can experience at INTERFORST.

Forest 4.0: Trends and developments

Forest 4.0 is shaped in particular by five developments: digital twins for planning and management, AI-supported early detection of damage, practical remote sensing using drones and sensors, connected machinery and digital timber logistics, and digital proof of origin and sustainability.

Challenges of digitalization in the forest

Despite all its advantages, however, the digital transformation of the forestry sector is not a guaranteed success and is hampered by various obstacles: lack of network coverage, heterogeneous interfaces, insufficient data quality, as well as costs, training requirements, and a lack of acceptance. INTERFORST provides a platform for putting these challenges into context, sharing experiences, and presenting practical solutions or collaboratively refining existing solutions.

Digital pioneers at INTERFORST 2026

At the leading trade fair for forestry and forestry technology, exhibitors will showcase a modern and wide range of digital solutions. Husqvarna, for example, supports the digital management, monitoring, and maintenance of machine fleets with its Fleet Services. STIHL is showcasing its digital services and connected device management. Sennebogen is presenting digital machine monitoring and

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logistics processes, while Wahlers Forsttechnik is offering insights into digital machine and process solutions. New at INTERFORST are the SYSTEMS & COMPONENTS Forestry by DLG section and the Start-Up Area.

SYSTEMS & COMPONENTS Forestry

Component and system manufacturers are working hand in hand with OEMs to develop digital solutions for modern forestry. Whether it's automotive electronics, sensor technology, data management, or AI-based applications, many innovations for efficient and sustainable forest management originate in the supply industry. In the special exhibition area SYSTEMS & COMPONENTS Forestry by DLG in Hall B6, visitors will gain insights into precisely these technological developments and meet the companies that are helping to shape the next generation of forestry technology.

Technical supporting program focusing on digitalization

Under the heading "Forestry Technology in Motion," several presentations on the congress stage on Friday, October 16, 2026, from 10:00 to 14:00, will focus on digital developments and innovative technologies in the forestry industry. Topics include digital forest management systems, forest inventory, AI applications, and quality assurance in roundwood sorting and measurement. The special show in Hall B6, featuring live demonstrations on all of INTERFORST's key topics, rounds out the supporting program in the field of digitalization.

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

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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.