

Impact of bark beetle calamity on forests owners in the Czech Republic

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Financial contribution to mitigate the effects of the bark beetle calamity

It is estimated (<http://www.czechforest.cz/>) that current bark beetle calamity represents in forestry sector the economic damage amounting to 100 billion CZK. Therefore, the financial support from Ministry of Agriculture to private, public and state forest owners was prepared. However, this support was not entirely sufficient (Fig. 2). The one-year calculated damage was 44 billion CZK in 2020. On the other hand, amount of financial contributions (for the whole period 2017–2020) was only 12.9 billion CZK. The situation got better following spring 2021 as the price of coniferous timber increased again.



Structure of owners

In the Czech Republic, about 54% of forest land is state-owned (Fig. 1). As for the non-state ownership, there is only one forest estate larger than 10,000 ha owned by one person. The number of owners whose land exceeds 250 ha is 103 persons, and 435 persons have more than 50-ha forests. On the other hand, 77% of forest owners have just 1-ha or smaller forested lands; one third of owners share even smaller land than 0.1 ha. The private forests ranging from 1 ha to 10 ha of the area account for 42% of the forested area in the Czech Republic.

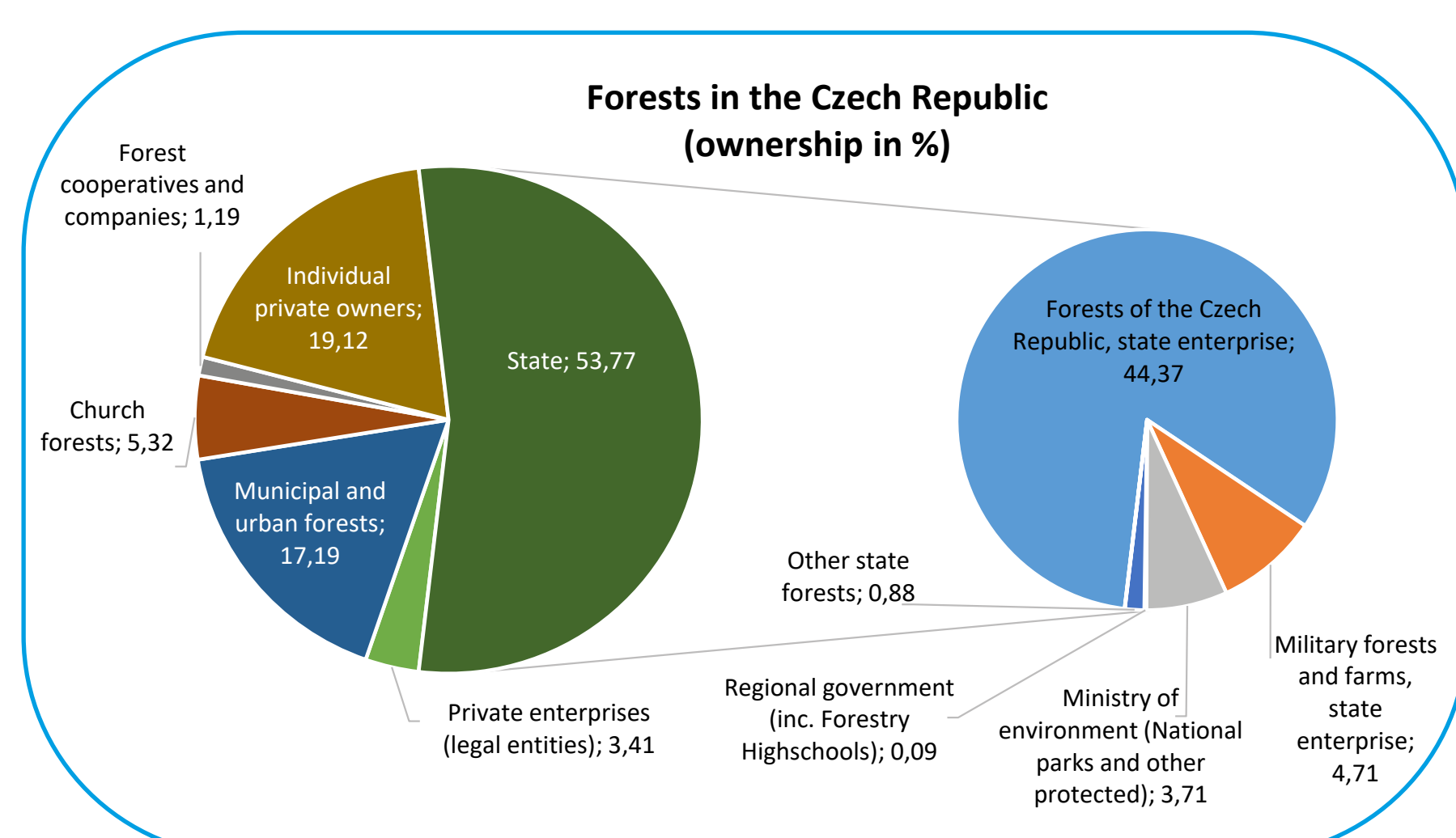


Fig. 1: Forest ownership in the Czech Republic (Data source: <https://eagri.cz/>)

The only economically independent estates are those with an appropriate diversification of both age and stand structures, which allows a maintenance of annual and/or periodical costs and yields. This applies only to 17.5% of the private forested area.

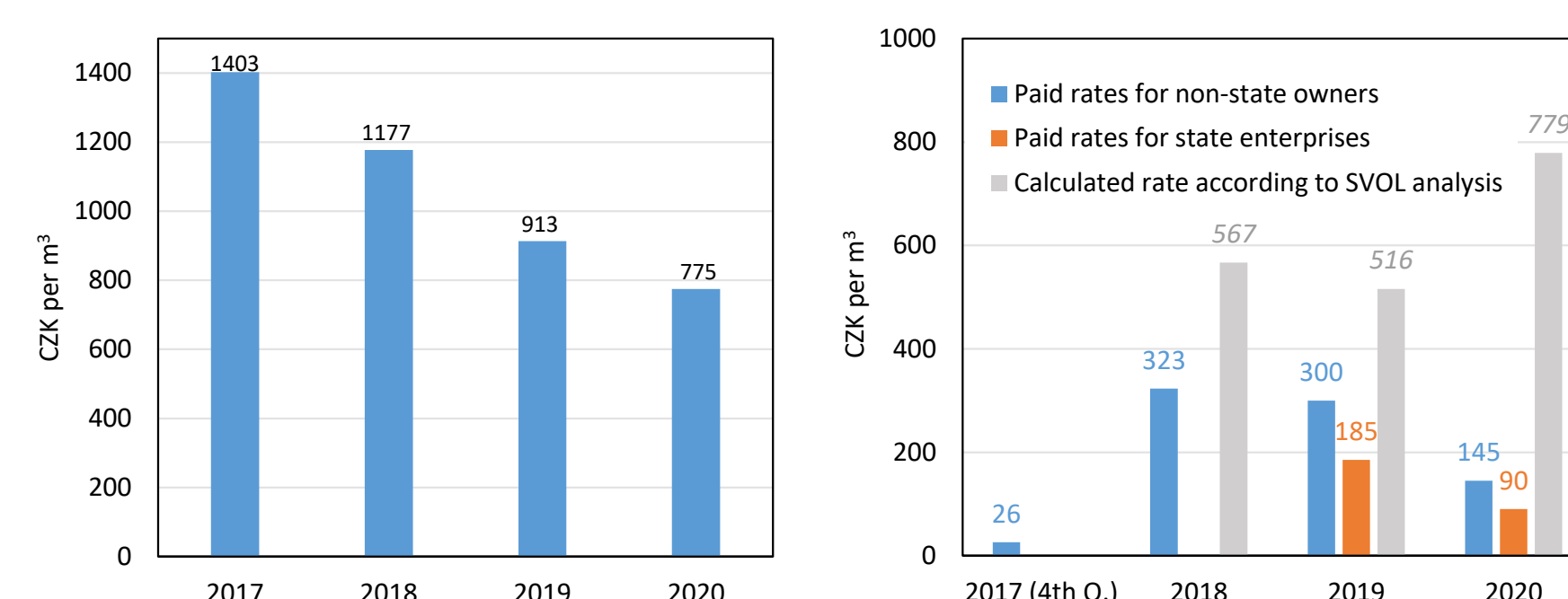


Fig. 2: Development of monetization of merchantable coniferous wood (according to SVOL analysis) at the roadside (left) compared with financial contribution for forest owners (right). The monetization was decreasing gradually over 2017–2020 as the price trended down by 50% of its initial value. The rate of subsidy paid in order to mitigate the negative impacts of bark-beetle calamity increased first (2018) and then also moved down, which further worsen the owners' economy.



Calamity in small estates

70% of the small estates are supervised by State forests of the Czech Republic; the annual costs of such service are 158 million CZK. It is debatable whether the money were spent effectively. For example, the owners have not met supervising forestry staff for many years or they have not known them yet. Besides that, these foresters were not able to help organize operations needed and sell the timber. With no facilities and qualified staff the owners get into trouble. The future solution can be a service organization providing owners with all operations needed. The SVOL (see box) is the organization that has been supporting the small-estate owners over a long time.

About SVOL

(Source: www.svol.cz)

The Association of Municipal, Private and Church Forest Owners in the Czech Republic (hereinafter SVOL) is a voluntary non-profit organization associating non-state forest owners and managers.

Mission:

- to participate in forming forestry policy and advocate respective property rights, and to ensure the balance among all aspects of forest management in related legal regulations,
- to draw attention to social, economic and environmental benefits of community, private and church forest properties for stability and development of country areas,
- to participate in the improvement of expert standards of forest properties management and advocate sustainable ways of forest management, by supporting, among other things, PEFC certification of forests,
- to increase prestige of forest staff and promote consumption of wood as a renewable resource,
- to contribute by organizing joint business mechanisms to long-term supplier-customer relations, the steadiness of the markets and higher appreciation of the wood produced,

At present SVOL represents more than 1,500 non-state forest owners (communities, towns, private forests, forest co-operatives, church, unions of small-scale owners) managing ca. 551,000 hectares of woodlands, which accounts for ca. 21% of the total forest area in the Czech Republic.

Activities:

- monitoring of the amendments to the statutory rules and orders in force or in preparation,
- co-operation in preparation of grant regulations of regions and the Rural Development Programme in the field of forest management and development of rural areas,
- co-operation with other professional organizations within the country and abroad – CEPF, FECOF, ELO,
- organization of workshops and excursions for owners and administrators of non-state forest properties,
- forest pedagogy
- organization of joint wood sale,
- joint purchase of forest material within regions,
- advisory services and juridical consultancy for SVOL members
- regular information services for SVOL members,
- public information, participation in exhibitions, publishing of specialized publications, publishing the occasional Newsletter for Owners, Administrators and Friends of Forests.

