

Managing forests for multiple purposes

Managing cork oak: a tale of two countries

Silvicultural guidelines for cork oak stands were considered separately for Spain and Portugal as there are differences between the stands and silvicultural tools used.

Spain - optimising stand management

When managing cork oak stands for economic gain, two factors are important: the number of times the cork is stripped from the tree (debarking) and the period of time between each debarking. Three influencing factors were examined for optimal profitability:

- i. cork thickness 9 years after debarking (indicates cork quality)
- ii. the discount rate
- iii. cork price.

StarTree results show:

- i. longer rotation lengths + delayed thinnings = greater cork thicknesses
More debarking can be carried out and with shorter periods between debarking operations.
- ii. Considering the discount rate, an influence similar to cork thickness is evident, highly relevant in terms of profitability.
- iii. Fluctuations in cork market prices do not have as drastic an effect as thickness and discount rate.

Management schedules provided by optimisation exercises are guidelines to help forest managers in decision making.

They provide information on how to adapt management according to market conditions and / or cork quality.

How can this help?

Portugal - user-friendly support tools

Management guidelines for cork oak were revised by using support tools available at

www.isa.ulisboa.pt/cef/forchange/fctools/pt/inicio

They can be used when deciding:

- i. where to plant depending on soil conditions
- ii. initial density of plantation
- iii. the best time to start the debarking
- iv. which cork rotation maximises the net present value
- v. cork debarking intensity
- vi. the best stand structure for cork debarking

These tools have also been used in research on the effect of certain silvicultural practices on tree and cork growth, namely, spontaneous vegetation control and debarking.

How can this help?

Silvicultural support tools help forest managers in decision making.

They provide easy-to-access support when considering various key factors at each stage of stand development in a new plantation.

Want to know more? [Read the whole report!](#)

