



BY ELIZABETH
DE CARVALHAES,
EXECUTIVE PRESIDENT OF
THE BRAZILIAN PULP AND
PAPER ASSOCIATION (BRACELPA)
✉: FALECONOSCO@BRACELPA.ORG.BR

CHALLENGES OF THE 4Fs

One of the biggest global challenges of the 21st century is the pursuit of sustainable solutions for satisfying the growing demand for food, renewable fuels and fibers, without forgetting the need to protect forests and to prioritize social inclusion. Estimates by the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) that the world population will reach 9 billion inhabitants by year 2050 will lead to an increase in the search for land and water, among other natural resources.

In relation to food, for example, expectations show that demand shall triple by 2050, which will require a 67% increase in grain production, while at the same time climate change will reduce agricultural productivity in many countries.

As of 2030, there'll also be intense competition for land and water resources to produce food, fiber and energy – demand for energy, for example, will double. By 2050, the accumulated deficit of productive land could reach 200 million hectares, while wood harvesting (natural and planted forests) shall be three times greater than that reported in 2010, totaling 13 billion m³.

The main challenge of producing 100% renewable energy by 2050 will also call for a significant effort on the part of governments and private initiative. It is calculated that an additional 250 million hectares of agriculture crops and forest plantations will be needed for bioenergy production.

The interaction of all these demands is what we call "challenges of the 4Fs" (Food, Fibers, Fuel and Forests), which products satisfy all the fundamental needs of humans.

Balancing these needs of the population with the regeneration capacity of Earth's natural resources is the center of the problem. This will call for a global change in production and consumption paradigms. The productive sector will have to perfect the use of these resources, reconciling sustainable production of the 4Fs.

Within the scenario, it is undeniable that forests will play a vital role. WWF, for example, underscored this importance in the "Live Forests" report, which analyzes population growth forecasts and the

resulting increase in demand for natural resources, highlighting the role of forests, both natural and planted, in satisfying these needs.

However, in addition to acknowledging the importance of forests as providers of products and services, it is also necessary for there to be an interaction between the energy and food production sector, as well as the adoption of policies that integrate the sectors that use land towards developing more sustainable strategies.

This is a theme of extreme relevance for Brazil and for the sector of forest plantations, and should be at the core of discussions regarding the future of this industry. For such, Bracelpa has been supporting initiatives that promote debates and propose business policies and solutions that help master Challenges of the 4Fs.

The Forest Dialogue (TFD) event in 2012, in Capão Bonito, inner São Paulo state, is an example of this involvement. The event aimed to discuss the theme with various stakeholder representatives, such as NGOs, businesses and rural producers. The organizers are analyzing how to advance, at present, in these discussions.

Reconciling the intensive use of land with environmental and forest protection, as well as social inclusion, was one of the main things discussed throughout the event. Dialogue showed the need to seek greater productivity for crops, better forest-management practices and guaranteed income for family agriculture and forest related activities, developed by grassroots communities.

Another important issue addressed refers to the planning of land use in an integrated and participative manner. Towards this end, solutions point to the integration of governments, industry and other sectors interested in this planning, in order to identify and divulge possible land uses, as well as qualify and raise awareness of the public.

The pulp and paper sector is aware of the importance and relevance regarding the challenges that are to come in the near future and, especially, the huge importance that forest plantations will have in this scenario. A viable and sustainable alternative for satisfying the growing demand for the 4Fs. ■