

# Field Genetics Network 8, Latvia, 25-27 april

The Field Genetics Network (FGN) consists of persons from all over Europe active in operative practical tree breeding and forest genetics.

The FGN meeting takes place every second year and the organizers this year was Āris Jansons and Mārtiņš Zeps from the Silava organisation in Latvia.

## Day 1

An introduction to the Latvian tree breeding program was held by Āris Jansons and after that Guntis Grandāns from A/S Latvian State Forest (LSF) presented their plant and seed department.

We visited LFS's nursery and micropropagation facility in the Kalsnava region. It was nice to see that graft branches collected in Sweden by me and Mats Eriksson now were ready grafts and soon to be planted out in seed orchards in Latvia. We also looked at indoor birch seed orchards. This concept is already implemented in Finland and soon also in Sweden.



Indoor birch seed orchard.



Grafting of Scotch Pine.



Patrick Pastuszka from INRA inspecting grafts .

After the nursery visit we went out in the forest to look at different field trials. Āris Jansons and Mārtiņš Zeps explained what difficulties that they are facing regarding their field trials and there were many good discussions among the participants since we have similar problems with insects etc.



Mārtiņš and Āris.



Lars Nørgaard Hansen, Københavns Universitet and Mārtiņš discussing soil preparation of field trials



Kalsnava arboretum.

One of the trials that we visited were a Scotch Pine trial that was inoculated with Heterobasidion. As we at Skogforsk is working quite a lot with this but on Picea Abies it was very interesting to see.

The last activity of the first day was a visit to the Kalsnava arboretum. The whole arboretum is protected as a nature reserve and consists of app. 2500 taxa with 45000 individual plants.

## Day 2

The first stop of day two was the Veseta floodplain mire, a 427 hectare Natura 2000 area in the Kalsnava region. The area's main nature values are spring fens and transition mires, old river beds and swamp forests.

After that stop we got an interesting demonstration of some arborist work and we were shown climbing equipment developed in Latvia.

The last stop of the day was to the long-term research station Viesetnieki where we looked at newly improved drained forest area and we were shown how Silava monitored ground level water, soil moisture, evapotranspiration and abundance of biogenic elements in groundwater etc.



## Day 3

The final day consisted of a visit to Latvian State Forest Research Institute "Silava" where we got the opportunity to look at their micro propagation- and climatic lab. As always there were interesting discussions regarding different equipment regarding pollination and controlled crossings.

## Summary

The 8<sup>th</sup> FGN meeting was successful in maintaining and improving good contacts and collaboration within the FGN. As a result of this meeting Skogforsk will plant both contorta and scotch pine trials in Latvia during 2018. The 9<sup>th</sup> meeting will take place in Denmark 2019 where also the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting took place.

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