

Office of the
Chief Conservator of Forests,
Trivandrum,
Dated 1-1-1985.

CIRCULAR NO.1/85

Sub:- Disposal of major forest produce from sale depot/Range Depots – Procedure to be followed – instructions regarding.

Several Timber Merchants as also a few Timber merchants Associations in Kerala have raised complaints on the lapses and omissions done by the Depot staff, leading to avoidable losses by auctioning major forest produce. After scrutiny of the complaints the following instructions are issued:

1. Letting an sale/Range Depots is seen done not as per standing orders Depot Officer /Range officer/Divisional Forest Officer will see that letting is done species wise and class-wise each lot with its components all together at one site properly stacked, indicating thereon with white paint, lot No., No., of logs, Poles, and class, with species notation following the standing orders. On no account should the auctioning officer put up a lot for sale if it is found that the components are at different places improperly stacked and numbered. Complaints in this regard if provided will entail in disciplinary action against the auctioning officer.

2. Regarding measurements, it has been complained that in some depots, consistently there has been shortage in girth and length measurements of logs; the actual measurements being short than the depot measurements much below the permissible levels,. Such short measurements would lead to disputes often putting the timber merchant to difficulties. It is the duty of the Divl. Forest Officer/Asst. Conservator of Forests at the time of check-measurement to satisfy himself on the correctness of the final measurements. Complaints if proved will be severely dealt with and the Range Officer/Depot Officer/Divisional Forest Officer involved will be answerable for such deliberate mischief.

3. Regarding stacking in depots and dumping sites/forest depots. Time and again complaints have been received that this has been done in a very haphazard helter-skelter manner. In plantation thinned, letting and disposal without proper haulage to road side attacking sites are also complained upon. This only shows that the Divl. Forest Officer/Asst. Conservator of Forests who finally check measurement and approves the letting and so as the disposal with such defective lotting which leads to complaints and litigation. With little more care on the part of the auctioning Officers grave omissions could be avoided, Special care should be taken in this regard by the Divl. Forest Officer/Asst. Conservator of Forests at the time of check-measurements.

4. Regarding publicity given for the auctions, there are complaints of short notice publicity especially with regard to auctions conducted in Ranges. This results in inadequate response and resultant lack of competition. With little more care on the part of the Conservator of Forests/Divl. Forest Officer this complaint can easily be avoided. In the interest of getting maximum prices for the produce offered for sale the auctioning officers will see that more than adequate publicity is given with more days of interval between the date of appearance of sale notification and date of auction.

5. Regarding delay in granting extensions complaint voiced by the timber merchants has been on the delay in Depot Office/Range Office/Division Office in granting extension of time for remittance of balance value and for belated removal. In such matters "Service motto" is often forgotten and the customers are put to undue hardships through red-tape and delay. Such transactions involve the "good-will" of the Department without which there could be no proper functioning with reasonable efficiency. The concerned officers will take special care in this regard and minimize delay. Disciplinary action will be taken against those who willfully delay such matters with bad intentions.

6. Regarding the issue of confirmation for the lots beyond the powers of "spot-confirmation" by Divl. Forest Officer, there are standing orders to the effect that even in cases where the sale papers will have to go up to Conservator of Forests the issue of confirmation should not be delayed beyond one month from date of auction. At Depot Officer/Range Officer level and Asst. Conservator of Forests/Divl. Forest Officer level special top-priority treatment should be given for such sale papers and the same submitted within a week to the higher office for orders. Recently a case involving delay beyond 10 months in not deciding one way or other by the accepting authority in an auction sale conducted in a Range in Southern Circle has been brought to the notice of the Head of the State Government which led to adverse criticism on the functioning of the Department. It is quite disheartening to note that neither the Divl. Forest Officer who auctioned the produce nor the Conservator of Forests who has to accept the offer did not with due diligence for deciding the case of confirmation and choose the "safe" alternative of entering into protracted correspondence. The conservator of Forests/Divl. Forest Officers will see that such matters are decided with utmost speed and mutual discussion. The time limit fixed for decision making" in this regard will be observed scrupulously and any such complaints of proved will result in drastic disciplinary action against those for the inordinate delay.

The above instructions will be strictly followed in the disposal of major forest produce by all the officers concerned with sale of timber, firewood, etc.

The receipt of the Circular will be acknowledged.

M. SIVARAJAN,
CHIEF CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS.

All Conservators of Forests/Field Director, Project Tiger, Kottayam.
All Divl. Forest Officers/Asst. Conservators of Forests
C.A.s to all Chief Conservators of Forests.
All Branch Officers/Stock file.

JR/2-1-85.