

GOVERNMENT OF KERALA

Abstract

Forests – Irregularities in working of supply and sale coupes Measures to remove them – Orders issued

AGRICULTURE (FOREST) DEPARTMENT

G.O.Rt.No.882/76/AD.

Dated, Trivandrum, 9-3-1976

Read:- Letter F.83/75 dated 29-1-1976 from the Additional Inspector General, Vigilance (Forests & Taxes), Trivandrum.

ORDER

Serious irregularities frequently occur in the working of Supply coupe contracts which result in considerable loss of revenue to Government. Conferences of Conservators of Forests and Divisional Forest Officers were held at Quilon, Trichur and Calicut to discuss possible measures to reduce the scope for irregularities. The recommendations of the conference of Conservators of Forests and Divisional Forest Officers were discussed at a conference held by Special Secretary, Agriculture with the Chief Conservator of Forests, Chief Conservator of Forests (Dev.) and Additional Inspector General, Vigilance (Forests and Taxes). Based on the decisions arrived at in the conference the Additional Inspector General, Vigilance (Forests and Taxes) in his letter read above has forwarded the following recommendations for orders of Government.

1. As far as possible the supply coupes should conform to a more or less regular shape or geometric figure so that the boundaries are more or less straight avoiding unnecessary zig zags. The number of stations should be kept to the minimum and on an average there should not be more than one station for every 10 chains of the boundary. Wherever natural features like rivers and streams or roads etc. are available the coupes should be so laid out as to have these features as boundaries. The practice of tar banding the nearest trees outside the boundary may be adopted uniformly in all divisions. The width of the tar band should be 5 cms. Wooden boards (30 cms. x 15 cms) indicating the name of the coupe should be affixed on the trees standing just outside the boundary at the salient corners of the coupe. These trees should bear two tar bands 30 cms. apart.
2. All supply coupes, the area of which exceeds 20 hectares should be sub divided into smaller units or sub coupes of approximately 10 hectares each. In the case of selection coupes which are usually larger in extent the area of sub coupes may extend upto 50 hectares. The sub division should be done immediately after survey and before commencement of marking. The width of the sub division boundaries should be 3 metres.
3. The marking of trees should proceed from sub coupe to sub coupe so that errors or omissions could be eliminated. This would afford greater facility for checking.
4. The volume table prepared by Sri. N.R. Nair refers to various species in the natural forests and it should not be made use of in estimation of standing volume of teak and other species in plantations. Separate volume tables may be prepared for plantations of teak and other species, and until such tables are made available the conventional method of taking the girth measurement at breast height and ocular estimate of the height of the tree should be relied upon to estimate the volume of the trees.
5. Even where volume table is applied to estimate the yield of timber it is necessary to record the height of the tree by ocular estimate so that this can act as a counter-check.
6. In view of the fact that all coupes will hereafter be sub divided into sub coupes, and marking done sub coupe by sub coupe, check measurement should be carried out in such a manner that

25% of the trees marked in each sub coupe should be checked by the Ranger and entries made in the marking register with initials of the checking officer and date. Similarly the 10% of check by the Divisional Forest Officer should be made sub coupe by sub coupe. The checking Officer should affix his initials with date against the entries in respect of all the trees checked by him.

7. The Conservator of Forests should insist on the submission of a certificate of checking by the Ranger and the Divisional Forest Officer when the abstract of the marking list is submitted to him.
8. In cases where the marking numbers have become occluded such numbers should be rechiselled by the coupe forester and an entry made to that effect in the Marking Register before the tree is allowed to be felled. Where the occlusion of the marking numbers had occurred on a large number of trees and it is difficult to decipher the original numbers – a remarking with fresh serial numbers may be ordered after personal inspection by Conservator of Forests.
9. The uniform practice in the department should be that the approved agents of contractor should hold a power of attorney from the contractor to look after all the works in the coupes and receive instructions from the Range Officers and the inspecting officers.
10. The list of employees working in the coupe should be filed by the contractor before the coupe Forester and Range Officer. Changes in the list of employees should be promptly reported to the coupe Forester and Range Officer.
11. Even though the entire marked trees are entrusted to the contractor and his acknowledgement obtained in the marking register, the fellings in the coupe should be regulated sub coupe by sub coupe. The rule that all trees in a sub coupe should be felled and collected before taking up the next sub coupe may be relaxed in case of extraction of softwood and rosewood. Not more than two sub coupes should be under working at any time. In other words, the contractor shall not commence work in the third sub coupe before completing the work (including transport of collected timber) in any one of the two sub coupes already under working. In deciding the order of working of sub coupes the facilities for extraction of felled timber should also be taken into consideration. The general rule that all works including transport should be over the any one of the first two sub coupe before he is allowed to enter the next sub coupe shall not be relaxed except for reasons beyond the control of the contractor and the Department. In such cases the relaxation may be made only after a personal inspection of the coupe by the Divisional Forest Officer and the reasons for the relaxation should be recorded by him and reported to Conservators of Forest.
12. The Range Officer may be authorised to enforce a stoppage of work in the coupe to facilitate enquiry into irregularities noticed. Whenever such stoppage is enforced it should be immediately reported to the Divisional Forest Officer and he alone shall be competent to order a resumption.
13. As soon as the trees are felled, the actual bole length and the length of branch wood capable of yielding timber should be recorded in the marking register. The date of felling of the tree should also be recorded.
14. Registration of logs should be done at stump site and list of logs should be prepared by the coupe Forester himself. The daily progress of work should be written up in a coupe diary by the coupe Forester/Guard and a weekly abstract of the diary sent to the Range Officer and the Divisional Forest Officer.

15. There should be a record of inspection of the coupe kept in the custody of the coupe forester. The inspection notes of the Range Officer, the Divisional Forest Officer and other inspecting officers and the instructions given to the field staff should be recorded in this coupe register. Whenever any officer visits or inspects the coupe he shall record the result of the inspection in the register. On completion of the work in the coupe the Register should be send to the Divisional Offices.
16. In cases where more than one log is obtained from a single trees, it is necessary to know by reference to the marking number chiselled on the log the total number of logs obtained from the tree. Thus when there are 4 logs obtained from a particular tree the marking number should be chiselled on the first log with suffix A/D, on the Second log B/D should be suffixed, C/D on third log and D/D on the 4th log.
17. Temporary sheds may be sanctioned for the accommodation of the staff within the coupes. The coupe Forester/Guard should stay in the coupe and they should record their movements and duties performed in the coupe diary.
18. (i) The present system of issue of Form III pass by the Range Officer may be continued. But the number of logs in each pass should be restricted to not more than 100 or 200. Before issue of the Form III pass for the next consignment of registration it should be verified whether any log as per the previous pass is still remaining undelivered and if so for what reason. The reasons should be recorded in the file and a report made to the next higher authority.
ii) For each consignment of transport separate Form IV pass may be issued. The usage of the work "Bandyman Pass" may be discontinued. It may be termed as "Subsidiary Pass" and issued in triplicate instead of the present practice of issueing it in duplicate. Two copies should be sent along with the consignment. The original should be surrendered and filed in the depot, while the arrival of logs at the depot should be acknowledged in the other copy by a memberof the depot staff. This acknowledged copy should be re-delivered to the Forester in charge of the coupe for his record. Only on production of this acknowledgement should the coupe Forester/Guard allow the same lorry to take the next load from the coupe. If it happens that a particular lorry does not return to the coupe and no acknowledgement for the load already taken is received by the coupe forester within 2 days of the date of despath of the first load the matter should be reported to the Range Officer who shall enquire into the matter and report to the Divisional Forest Officer.
iii) The subsidiary pass is at present issued by the coupe forester. This practice will continue, but the pass should be acknowledged and signed by the contractor or his agent before the loaded vehicle is allowed to leave the coupe.
- 19) The monthly statement given by the contractor should be compared and reconciled with the details to be given in the weekly statements proposed to be submitted by the Forester.
- 20) Separate day books for arrivals as well as removals of logs be maintained in all depots. The record should contain information regarding the Register No. of the lorry, the stock numbers of logs, date and number of pass, date of arrival or removal.
- 21) The statement of undelivered logs should be prepared monthly (instead of quarterly). In view of the fact that a temporary receipt is to be issued from the depot for each consignment received, the statement of undelivered logs should have two columns to show details of logs temporarily receipted and those actually measured and taken to stock. The statement for each month should be prepared and sent before the 5th day of the succeeding month.

22) Marking lists and registration lists may be prepared on printed forms and arrangements for supply of the necessary forms may be made. Only a species-wise abstract of the marking list need be sent to the Conservator of Forests where also the certificates of checking should be recorded.

23) The practice of T.C. area is to maintain separate stock accounts for logs received from different divisions whereas in Malabar area the practice is to maintain a single stock account. In view of the provisions in the Kerala Forest Code the stock of timber in the depot should be maintained as a single stock irrespective of the number of despatch divisions.

24) Steps may be taken to facilitate prompt and adequate supply of printed forms and registers.

The recommendations are classified into two parts. Those considered here come under part I which do not require amendments to the Forest Code or rules. Government accept the above recommendations and they order accordingly. The Chief Conservator of Forests will take immediate steps to implement the various recommendations.

By Order of the Governor,

M. DHARMAMONI.

Under Secretary.

To

1. The Chief Conservator of Forests, Trivandrum.
2. The Chief Conservator of Forests (Development).
3. The Additional Inspector General Vigilance (F & T)
4. The Conservator of Forests (Evaluation)
5. All Conservators of Forests.
6. All Divisional Forest Officers.

Forwarded/by order.
Section Officer.