FORESTS FROM THE WEST PLAIN FOREST STEPPE – AN ALTERNATIVE FOR AGRICULTURE?

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Abstract

The present paper has taken into account data from forest management plans realized for 13 national Forest Districts during 1995-2008 for all forests located in the West Plain. The following elements were analysed: the surface occupied by oak stands, the species that compose them, age, field slope, altitude, flora and forest type, soil and station type. The study has shown that forests from the 3[d] Subcategory (Forests with protection functions against harmful climate and industrial factors) occupy a total surface of 7059 ha in the West Plain. Amongst them, the first place is occupied by the 1-3A functional category Forest steppe (situated between the steppe and silvosteppe area with the exception of parks and meadow forests) covering 3911 ha. Pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur* L.) is the most widespread species in these forests, occupying a surface of 2770 ha (71% of the entire surface). Oak forests from the forest steppe cover approximately 1/2 of the total area occupied in the West Plain by forests with protection functions against harmful climate and industrial factors. The altitude for these stands is specific to plain areas, ranging between 90 and 167 meters. The fields from the West Plain are medium plane, while the soils on which they vegetate have an in-depth humidity excess (stagnic luvisol, stagnosol, luvic stagnosol, mollic gleic arenosol). This aspect proves the fact that forests occupy surfaces that are better supplied with water in these areas characterized as dry. *Poa pratensis* is the most widespread plant and it is considerate indicator flora for oak stands.

Key words: stands, West Plain, altitude, structure, soil type