

## ANALYSIS OF THE DEWINGING PROCESS ON SCOTS PINE SEEDS WITH SMALL-SIZED DEWINGER

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### ABSTRACT

In recent years, in Bulgaria there is a tendency to reduce the yield of seeds of conifers. This implies a more efficient use of machines with less power and performance. The forest seed producing stations in the country are equipped with small-sized dewingers "Unitech", but at this stage we still lack research and data to work with seeds of Scots pine. In the present work, a study has been conducted and an analysis has been made on the dewinging process of the Scots pine seeds (*Pinus silvestris L.*) with a small-sized paddle dewinger "Unitech". As a result, functional dependencies have been identified, which express the relationship of the rotation speed of the working bodies and the duration of the process on the quality of the harvested seeds and the operating performance of the machine. On this basis, the optimal process parameters have been established and specific modes of dewinging of Scots pine seeds have been proposed. The obtained results have an applied science nature in the field of forest seed production and the design of machines for dewinging of seeds.

**Key words:** forest seed production, small-sized dewinger, technological parameters, Scots pine.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The seed dewinging in the forest seed stations in Bulgaria is done with paddle dewingers. They have better performance characteristics as it goes for the dewinging of seeds of conifers, compared to the brush dewingers (Gunev and Lyubenov 1973, Buszewicz and Gordon 1973, Lanquist 1980, Marinov 2006). A small series of small-sized paddle dewingers "Unitech" for use in the seed producing station and seed control stations (Fig. 1) was produced in Bulgaria for the dewinging of small batches of seeds of

coniferous species. These machines are designed on the basis of the small-sized dewinger "Lilliput", produced by the German company "Streckel & Schreder". Given the downward trend in seed yield in recent years in Bulgaria, these machines are a current solution for our current seed production (Lowman 1975, Lowman and Casavan 1978). Studies with a similar small-sized dewinger have been conducted in the forest seed station in Batak for dewinging of seeds of pine and spruce (Marinov *at al.* 2008), but there is still no data on the dewinging process of seeds of Scots pine, which is one of the main coniferous species in the country.

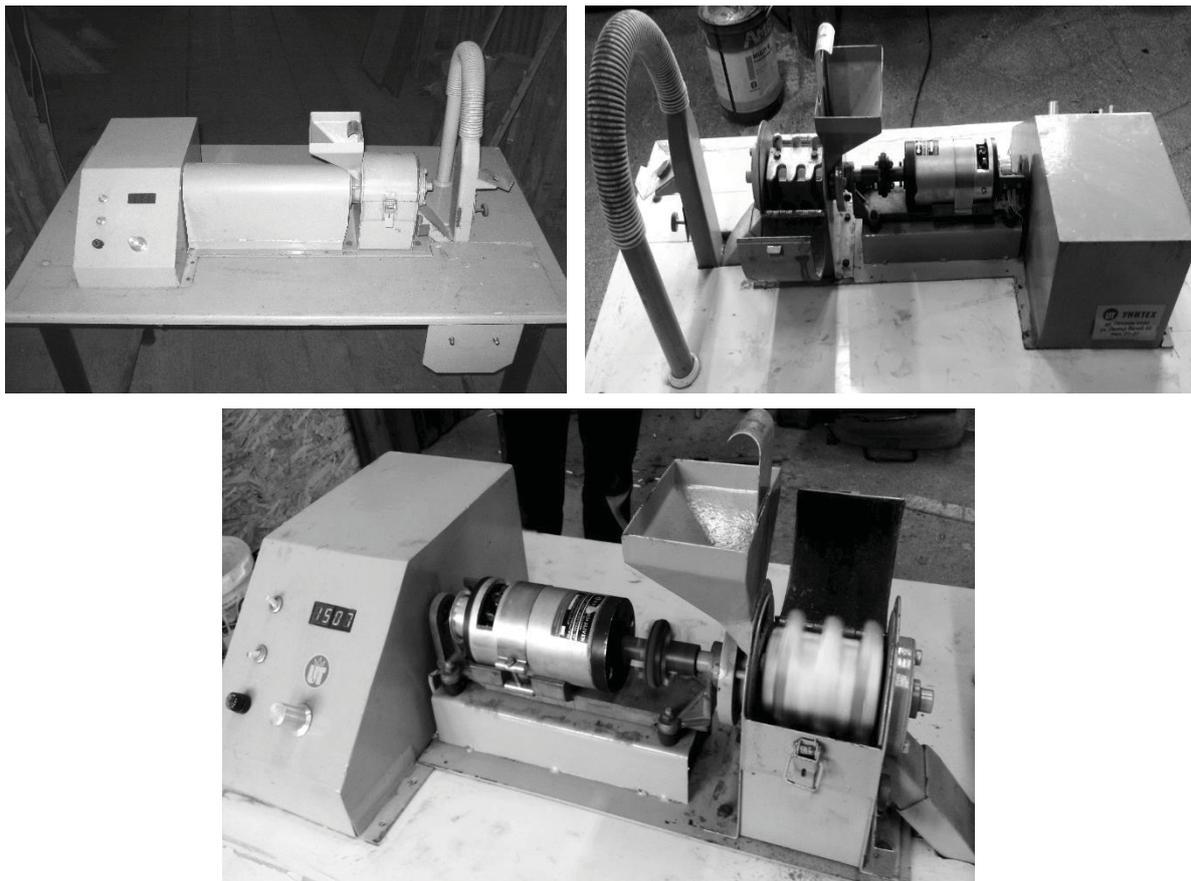


Figure 1: Pictures of the small-sized paddle dewinger „Unitech“

*The aim of the study* is to establish the influence of a small-sized paddle dewinger on the quantitative and qualitative indicators of the dewinging process and to identify the most effective processing modes for the seeds of Scots pine (*Pinus silvestris* L.).

*Object of the study* is the small-sized paddle dewinger "Unitech", part of the equipment of the Forest Seed Producing Station in Razlog. The study is focused on the qualitative and quantitative indicators of dewinging process of the seeds of the Scots pine. The Scots pine cones are harvested in the region of State Forestry "Razlog" and State Forestry "Eleshnitsa".

*Place of the study* is Forest Seed Producing Station in Razlog. The seed control samples are graded in the laboratory of Seed Control Station in Sofia.

The obtained results will be used for:

1. Finding the relationship between the qualitative and quantitative indicators of the process, at different technological modes.
2. Determining of the functional modes of the dewinger for obtaining high-quality seeds.
3. Establishment of recommended and optimal processing modes of the Scots pine seeds.

## 2. METHODS AND MATERIALS

To conduct the study, a special methodology for studying the paddle dewingers is used (Marinov and Lyubenov 2007). Object of the research is the technological process of dewinging with a small-sized paddle dewinger "Unitech" in the regional Forest Seed Station in Razlog. The study is focused on the seeds of the Scots pine harvested in the region of State Forestry Eleshnitsa and State Forestry Razlog. The purpose of the study is achieved through experimental study of the

main parameters (factors) influencing the process.

**Input parameters.** The input parameters of the researched object are variable and constant. Constant parameters are the constructional characteristics of the machine and the type of seed. Variable parameters are manageable and unmanageable. The last belong to the group of the interfering factors. The manageable parameters form the input manageable factors of the study. The larger number of factors requires a large number of experiments and the larger amounts of valuable seeds. In order to reduce the total number of experiments, some of the factors are kept at the same level. For this purpose, the humidity is kept within  $W = 7,5 \div 9 \%$ , which provide favorable conditions for the method to work. Other important factors for the process are the clearance between the tooth crest and the inner walls of the drum and the degree of fullness of the drum. During the study, the clearance is maintained at 2.5 mm, thereby preventing the risk of crushing of larger seed. From the studies carried out on the operation of these types of dewingers, it has been found that, in order to ensure optimal operation of the process, the drum must be filled with seed up to 75 % of its free internal volume (Gunev and Ljubenov, 1983). There is risk for damaging of the seeds and overload of the machine at a higher level of filling. At a lower filling level, the lapping effect on seeds is weaker, which requires an extension of the process and leads to a reduction in the operating performance. To provide such a filling level of the drum of the "Unitech" dewinger, 87 g seeds of Scots pine were used. To conduct the study two factors for control were selected, that meet the requirement for interoperability, manageability and independence. These are:

$X_1$  – the rotation speed the working bodies of the dewinger,  $\text{min}^{-1}$ ;

$X_2$  – the duration of the seed processing, min.

In order to limit the influence of interfering factors, such as impurities in the seeds, they need to be removed before carrying out the experimental observations.

**Output parameters.** The output parameters are selected in accordance with the assigned tasks and comply with the requirements of the production process. They are directly related to the qualitative and quantitative indicators of the process. For this purpose, the following 4 examination parameters are chosen:

$Y_1$  – level of the dewinging of the seeds, %;

$Y_2$  – germination of the seeds, %;

$Y_3$  – mechanical damage to the seeds, %.

$Y_4$  – operating productivity,  $\text{kg}\cdot\text{h}^{-1}$

The quality indicators of the seeds  $Y_1$ ,  $Y_2$  and  $Y_3$  can be evaluated by quantitative measurement. The degree of dewinging  $Y_1$  is a key indicator for assessing the performance of the machine. The germination (viability) of seeds  $Y_2$  is a main criterion in determining their quality. Micro damages and overheating of the seeds during processing, lowers their germination. As a studied parameter, this parameter is very important and gives a qualitative assessment of the performance of the machine. It expresses in percentage terms the number of rotting seeds, damaged due to the impact of the working bodies, compared to the total number of examined seeds. Mechanical damage  $Y_3$  express in percentage terms the mass of crushed and broken by the machine seeds to the total weight of the treated seed. The operating performance  $Y_4$  is defined as the ratio between the mass of the dewinged seeds and the time required for their processing.

**Study conditions.** The dewinging is done at a seed humidity of  $W = 7.5\text{--}9 \%$ , which is favorable to the dry method of work.

In order to maintain the humidity, the seeds are kept in the boiler room. After each test monitoring, the machine is cleaned of the remaining seeds and impurities. Sample drawing of seed control samples are taken at the entrance and exit of the machine, according to the methodology BIS 1953:99. To prevent suction of seeds, broken by the machine, the pneumatic aspirator is switched off during the experiments.

#### Methods and means of measurement.

To determine the quality indicators, seed control samples are compiled, before and after the experimental observations. The quality of the seeds is determined in accordance with BIS 208:99, and the samples are tested according to the procedure described, in BIS 1953:99.

The level of dewinging  $Y_1$  is determined by the formula,

$$Y_1 = \frac{m_o}{M} \cdot 100, \% \quad (1)$$

where  $m_o$  is the mass of the dewinged seeds, g;

$M$  – the total mass of the seeds in the seed-control sample, g.

Germination  $Y_2$  is determined after reduction of the rotting, non-dewinged seeds from the control sample at the entrance and exit of the machine, by the formula:

$$Y_2 = 100 - \frac{n_3}{N - n_{IP}} \cdot 100, \% \quad (2)$$

where  $n_3$  is the reduced number of the rotting, dewinged seeds in the examined sample;

$N$  – the total number of the examined seeds;

$n_{IP}$  – the number of the empty seeds.

The mechanical damage on the seeds  $Y_3$ , caused by the machine during the dewinging process is determined by the formula,

$$Y_3 = \frac{m_{MI}}{M} \cdot 100, \% \quad (3)$$

where  $m_{MI}$  is the reduced mass of the damaged by the machine seeds, g.

The operating productivity  $Y_4$  is determined by the formula,

$$Y_4 = \frac{V}{t}, \text{ kg} \cdot \text{h}^{-1} \quad (4)$$

where  $V$  is the quantity of the processed seeds, kg;

$t$  – time (duration) of the experiment, h.

The moisture content of the seeds is determined by the analytical method, by drying the samples in an oven thermostat at a temperature  $T = 103 \text{ }^\circ\text{C} \pm 2 \text{ }^\circ\text{C}$  (BIS 1953: 99). The duration of the process is measured with a stopwatch with accuracy up to 1s. The mass of seeds is weighed with an electronic scale with accuracy up to 0,01 g.

**Plan for conducting the experimental tests.** The experimental observations are carried out according to a test plan. The study is managed by two input factors:

- 1) Processing time of the seeds –  $t$ ;
- 2) The rotation speed of the shaft with the working bodies or dewinger shaft revolutions –  $n$ . The experiment is conducted by planning of five levels of modification factors (Table 1).

**Table 1: Testing plan**

Processing time – $t$ , [min]	2, 4, 8, 12, 16
Dewinger shaft revolutions – $n$ , [min <sup>-1</sup> ]	450, 600, 750, 900, 1050

**Duration of the study and number of observations.** The study duration is determined in accordance with the test plan. The time for each test is an input parameter of the study. The number of the observations for each test is directly related to the total duration of the study. The larger number of experimental observations gives more accurate information on the measured object, but also requires more tests, which requires the use of

a greater amount of valuable seeds. Considering the results from our previous studies (Marinov et al. 2009), it was decided that 3 observations for each test to be conducted.

**Drawing and analysis of results.** After completion of the experimental observations, the average values of the studied parameters are determined. These results are used to build functional graphic relationships, which show the change of the studied parameters, depending on the rotation speed of the working bodies and the duration of the process. On that base, an analysis of the results is made and optimal working modes of the machine are proposed.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. Results from the study

The study was conducted according to the approved methodology. To determine the extent of dewinging, germination and mechanical damage, the seed control samples are tested and graded in the laboratory of forest seed control station in Sofia. The operation modes of dewinging are determined by the rotation speed the shaft, leading the working and the time for seed processing, according to the test plan. The moisture content of the seeds is maintained within  $W_a = 7.5 \div 9\%$ , and the drum is filled 75%. The average values of the obtained results for the quality of the seeds are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Scots pine indexes for quality on dewinging process

Input parameters		Output parameters		
X <sub>1</sub> , Shaft revolutions, n [min <sup>-1</sup> ]	X <sub>2</sub> , Processing time, t [min]	Y <sub>1</sub> Dewinging level [%]	Y <sub>2</sub> Germination [%]	Y <sub>3</sub> Mechanical damage [%]
450	2	72.10	100.00	0.04
	4	78.90	100.00	0.07
	8	89.30	100.00	0.14
	12	96.20	99.50	0.23
	16	100.00	98.50	0.35
600	2	81.80	100.00	0.08
	4	87.20	100.00	0.12
	8	94.30	99.50	0.21
	12	98.20	98.50	0.33
	16	100.00	97.00	0.47
750	2	87.90	100.00	0.13
	4	92.50	99.50	0.18
	8	96.90	98.50	0.28
	12	99.30	97.00	0.43
	16	100.00	95.00	0.62
900	2	91.80	99.50	0.19
	4	94.70	99.00	0.25
	8	98.50	97.50	0.38
	12	100.00	95.50	0.55
	16	100.00	93.00	0.77
1050	2	94.90	99.00	0.29
	4	97.40	98.50	0.35
	8	99.50	96.50	0.49
	12	100.00	94.00	0.69
	16	100.00	90.50	0.95

The operating productivity of the machine as a 4<sup>th</sup> examined parameter Y<sub>4</sub> at a

constant mass of the seeds and a different duration is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Operating productivity

Processing time – t, [min]	2	4	8	12	16
Operating productivity – $Y_4$ , [kg.h <sup>-1</sup> ]	2.63	1.31	0.66	0.44	0.33

Based on the obtained results, graphical relationships, depicted in Figures 2, 3, 4 and 5, are constructed. The constructed dependencies express the correlation between the quality of the harvested seeds and the operating productivity of the machine, relative to

the rotation speed of the working bodies or the shaft revolutions [n] and the duration of the processing [t], at various levels of the examined entrance input parameters.

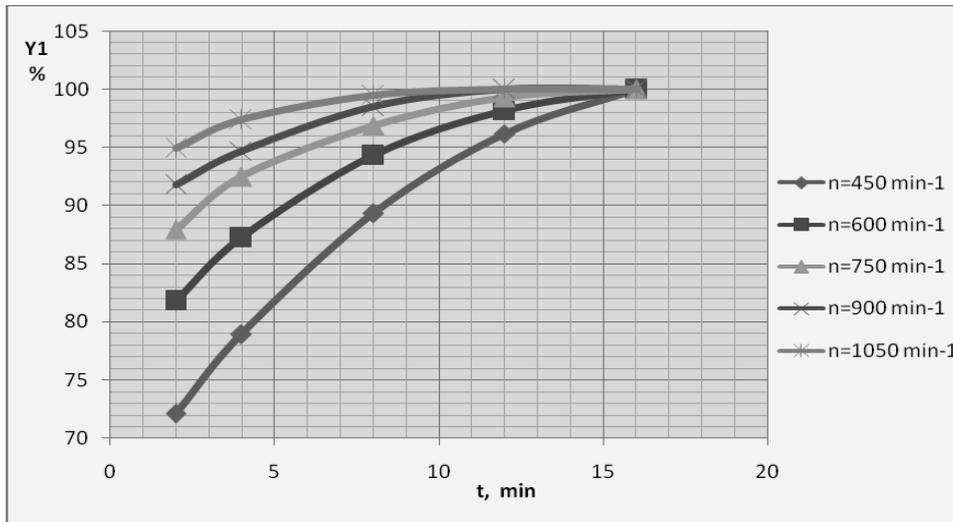


Figure 2: Variation of the level of dewinging  $Y_1$  at Scots pine seeds, dependence on the shaft revolutions [n] and the processing duration [t]

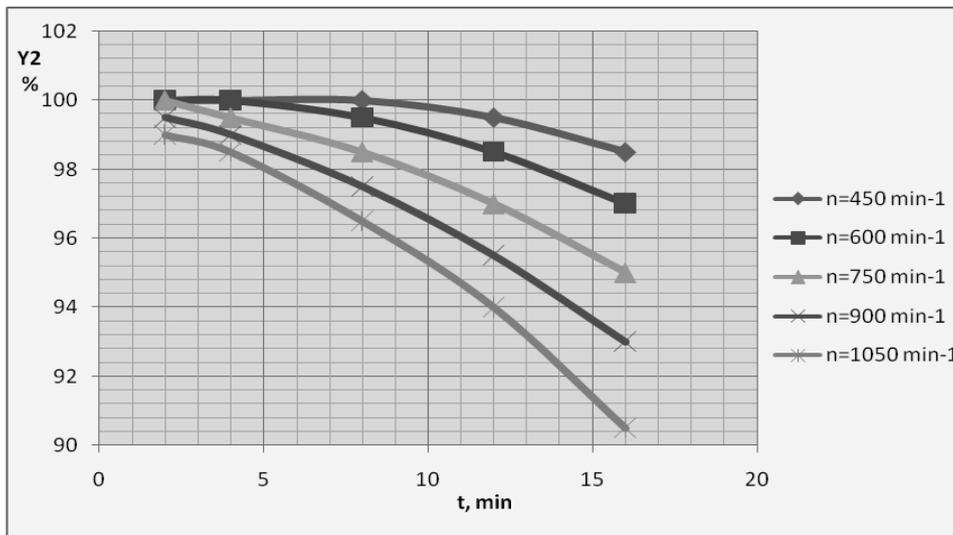


Figure 3: Variation of the germination  $Y_2$  at Scots pine seeds, dependence on the shaft revolutions [n] and the processing duration [t]

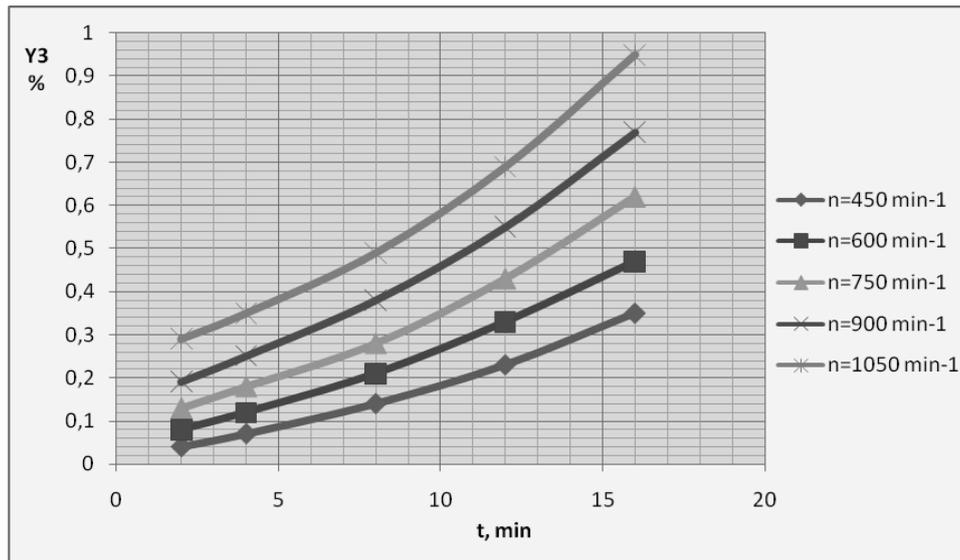


Figure 4: Variation of the mechanical damages  $Y_3$  at Scots pine seeds, dependence on the shaft revolutions [n] and the processing duration [t]

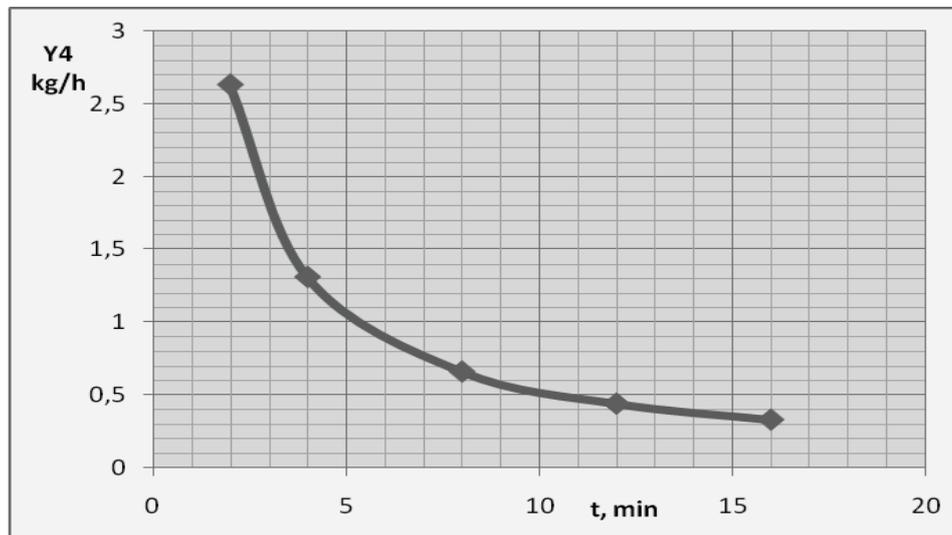


Figure 5: Variation of the operating productivity  $Y_4$  at Scots pine seeds dewinging, dependence the processing duration [t]

### 3.2. Analysis of the results and discussion

The increase of the rotation speed of the working bodies the process duration, increases in proportion to the level of dewinging –  $Y_1$  (Fig. 2). This fact stems from the more intense and longer-lasting effects on the seeds. The graph of Fig. 2 shows that in order to achieve the minimum level of first quality at 95 % level of dewinging, at the lowest shaft speed  $n = 450 \text{ min}^{-1}$  for the Scots pine, a minimum of 11 minutes to processing time

is required. Under this condition, the productivity of the machine is lower –  $Y_4 = 0.48 \text{ kg}\cdot\text{h}^{-1}$  (Fig. 5). At the highest observed speed of the shaft –  $n = 1050 \text{ min}^{-1}$ , only 2 minutes to achieve the desired level of dewinging is necessary, thereby achieving the highest productivity of the machine –  $Y_4 = 2.63 \text{ kg}\cdot\text{h}^{-1}$  dewinged seeds.

The increase in the speed of the working bodies can lead to an undesired increase in the damage to the seed and to reduce their propagation characteristics. Using paddle dewingers, it is accepted that the maximum

limit of mechanical damage to  $Y_{3\max} = 0.5 \%$ . The graphical correlations in Fig. 4 show that at a speed of  $n = 1050 \text{ min}^{-1}$ , the maximum processing time should not exceed 8 minutes. As the speed decreases, the time increases.

The increased friction and heat lead to the appearance of microscopic tearings of the mucilage and lowering the germination qualities of the seeds. This is seen in the graphics in Fig. 3. At lower shaft rotation of the working bodies, up to  $n = 750 \text{ min}^{-1}$ , during the first 4 to 8 minutes, the micro damages are not observed, while at higher speeds – over  $n = 900 \text{ min}^{-1}$  damages are observed even at the shorter processing times.

The operating productivity of the dewinger at a 75 % filling of the drum with 87 g of seeds, depends on the duration of the process. The productivity may be determined by the graphical correlation in Fig. 5. It can be increased by increasing the operating speed and shortened dewinging time.

The choice of an optimal mode is determined by the need for seed yield with high propagation characteristics. For the extraction of first quality seeds of Scots pine, certain restrictions in the levels of variation of the examined output parameters are required. According to the established rules and requirements for seed production of Scots pine (BIS 208: 99 and BIS 1953: 99), the minimum level of dewinging must be not less than 95 %. This makes it necessary to introduce a restrictive level of dewinging, which will be expressed by the condition:  $Y_1 \geq 95 \%$ . The mechanical damage, caused by the machine, according to the accepted rules in the seed yield, must not be larger than 0.5 %, which requires the introduction of a restrictive condition:  $Y_3 \leq 0.5 \%$ . For the production of Scots pine seeds with first quality, their germination shall not be less than 90 % or the condition:  $Y_2 \geq 90 \%$  must be met. The damage of healthy seeds, caused by the machine,

reduces their germination and propagation characteristics of the seeds produced.

The analysis leads to the conclusion that in order to identify optimal modes for the technological process, it is necessary to introduce certain restrictive conditions. These conditions for degree of dewinging and mechanical damage are:  $Y_1 \geq 95 \%$  и  $Y_3 \leq 0.5 \%$ . In order to establish the germination, there can be introduced more flexible restrictions that include more levels of  $Y_2 = 90 \%$  to  $Y_2 = 100 \%$ , thereby reducing the participation of non-viable seeds in the supplied batch. Only the rotting should be referred as non-viable seeds, since the empty seeds are subsequently released into the air channel of the pneumatic aspirator. If the number of these seeds is denoted with  $n_{3\text{exod}}$ , and the total number of examined seeds with  $N$ , the non-viable seeds ( $C$ ) are determined by the formula

$$C = \frac{n_{3\text{exod}}}{N} \cdot 100, \% \quad (5)$$

If several restrictive levels for the presence of non-viable seeds, prior to processing, such as:  $C = 0 \%$ ; 4 %; 8 %, 9 % and 10 % are introduced, then the allowable micro damages, caused by the machine, will be limited, respectively, to 10 %; 6 %; 2 %; 1 % and 0 %. These restrictive conditions will be expressed by the following equations:

$$\begin{aligned} Y_2 &\geq 90 \%; Y_2 \geq 94 \%; \\ Y_2 &\geq 98 \%, Y_2 \geq 99 \% \\ &\text{и } Y_2 = 100 \%. \end{aligned} \quad (6)$$

The boundary times for defining the duration of the seed processing may be established from these restrictive conditions. At a nominal shaft rotation speed of the working bodies, the values of these times are determined by the relationships in Figures 2, 3 and 4 in accordance with the graph-analytical method. The results obtained are shown in Table. 4.

Table 4: Limited parameters for Scots pine seeds processing duration at 1-quality production

Shaft revolutions n, [min <sup>-1</sup> ]	Duration of the processing time – t, [min]						Mechanical damage Y <sub>3</sub> , [%] Y <sub>3</sub> ≤ 0.5
	Dewinging level Y <sub>1</sub> , [%]		Germination Y <sub>2</sub> , [%]				
	Y <sub>1</sub> ≥ 95 %	Y <sub>2</sub> ≥ 90 %	Y <sub>2</sub> ≥ 94 %	Y <sub>2</sub> ≥ 98 %	Y <sub>2</sub> ≥ 99 %	Y <sub>2</sub> = 100 %	
450	t ≥ 11.4	*t <sub>max</sub> → 30	*t <sub>max</sub> → 25	*t <sub>max</sub> → 17	t ≤ 14.0	t ≤ 8.0	*t <sub>max</sub> → 25
600	t ≥ 8.8	*t <sub>max</sub> → 25	*t <sub>max</sub> → 21	t ≤ 13.5	t ≤ 10.2	t ≤ 4.0	t ≤ 16.5
750	t ≥ 6.3	*t <sub>max</sub> → 22	t ≤ 17.5	t ≤ 9.5	t ≤ 6.5	t ≤ 2.0	t ≤ 13.5
900	t ≥ 4.1	t ≤ 18.5	t ≤ 14.5	t ≤ 6.8	t ≤ 4.0	*t <sub>max</sub> → 1.0	t ≤ 10.8
1050	t ≥ 2.0	t ≤ 16.5	t ≤ 12.0	t ≤ 5.1	t ≤ 2.0	*t <sub>max</sub> → 0.5	t ≤ 8.1

\* Note. Minimum and maximum times in Table 4 indicated by the symbols "t<sub>min</sub> →" and "t<sub>max</sub> →" tend to values that are outside the scope of the trials. They are determined by graphical upgrade of the resulting dependencies and are presented as approximate estimates.

The obtained results are used to establish effective performance dewinging modes. Based on the results obtained and the graphical dependencies from Fig. 5, the operating productivity of the machine is determined.

#### . DETERMINING OF FUNCTIONAL MODES

The technological modes of a dewinger "Unitech" are managed by the speed of the rotation of the shaft of the working bodies and the duration of the process. In order to yield quality seeds, it is necessary to know what the percentage of non-viable (rotting) seeds in the batch for dewinging – C % is.

Many suitable modes can be identified from the obtained results in Table 4. In order to reduce their number, recommended boundary levels for some of the output parameters can be entered. The degree of dewinging is fixed at two levels: a lower level – Y<sub>1</sub> = 95 % and an upper level – Y<sub>1</sub> = 100 %. Modes of mechanical losses over Y<sub>3</sub> > 0.5 % are excluded. On this basis, using the graphical relations in Fig. 2, 3, 4 and 5, ten values for establishing the boundary functional modes of a "Unitech" dewinger can be determined. The results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Working regimes for Scots pine seeds dewinging

Shaft revolutions, [min <sup>-1</sup> ]	Dewinging level, [%]	Processing time, [min]	Germination reducing, [%]	Operating productivity, [kg.h <sup>-1</sup> ]
450	95	11.4	0	0.47
	100	16.0	1.5	0.33
600	95	8.8	0.5	0.58
	100	14.8	3.8	0.37
750	95	6.3	1.0	0.87
	100	12.8	3.0	0.39
900	95	4.1	1.0	1.28
	100	10.5	3.5	0.50
1050	95	2.1	1.0	2.61
	100	8.1	3.5	0.64

We can define 3 basic modes for laboratory and industrial dewinging of Scots pine seeds – „A”, „B” and „C” from the so determined functional modes.

#### Laboratory mode – "A".

This mode is suitable for work in the laboratory and Forest Seed Control Stations. The rotation speed of the working bodies is n = 450 min<sup>-1</sup>, and the processing time is t =

11.4 min. In this mode, there is no seed damage and reduced seed germination ( $Y_2 = 100\%$  и  $Y_3 = 0.21\%$ ). The dewinging level is  $Y_1 = 95\%$ , and the operating productivity is  $W_h = 0.47 \text{ kg}\cdot\text{h}^{-1}$ .

#### Light operating mode – "B".

This mode is suitable for use in Forest Seed Producing Stations when the harvest of seeds is with low germination qualities. The rotation speed of the working bodies is  $n = 600 \text{ min}^{-1}$  and the processing time is  $t = 8.8 \text{ min}$ . In this mode, a germination decrease with  $0.5\%$  ( $Y_2 = 99.5\%$  и  $Y_3 = 0.21\%$ ) is accepted. The dewinging level is  $Y_1 = 95.1\%$ , and the operating productivity –  $W_h = 0.58 \text{ kg}\cdot\text{h}^{-1}$ .

#### Intensive operating mode – "C".

This mode is suitable for use in Forest Seed Producing Stations when the harvest of seeds is with high germination qualities. The rotation speed of the working bodies is  $n = 1050 \text{ min}^{-1}$  and the processing time is  $t = 2.1 \text{ min}$ . In this mode, a germination decrease with  $1\%$  ( $Y_2 = 95\%$  и  $Y_3 = 0.29\%$ ) is accepted. The dewinging level is  $Y_1 = 96\%$ , and the operating productivity –  $W_h = 2.61 \text{ kg}\cdot\text{h}^{-1}$ .

### CONCLUSION

The present study is the first in Bulgaria on the dewinging of the seeds from Scots pine with a small-sized paddle dewinger "Unitech", produced in Bulgaria. As a result, original results are obtained, from which the following important conclusions and recommendations can be made:

1. The functional relations to determine the qualitative and quantitative process parameters have been established. With their help, appropriate technological modes for dewinging of Scots pine seeds can be established.

2. The boundary and optimal modes of the technological process have been established.
3. The functional modes for yield of first quality seeds have been established.
4. Recommended technological modes for dewinging of Scots pine seeds in laboratory and production conditions have been defined.

The obtained results have an applied science nature in the field of forest seed production and the design of machines for dewinging of seeds. They can be used by Forest Seed Producing Stations and Seed Control Stations for determining of optimal work modes for Scots pine seed processing with a small-sized dewinger "Unitech"/"Lilliput".

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## CONTENTS

SAWING OF DOUGLAS FIR LOGS WITH NARROW BAND SAW BLADES IN WINTER CONDITIONS .....	5
Zhivko Gochev, Valentin Atanasov	
CORRELATION BETWEEN PHYSICAL AND MECHANICAL PROPERTIES OF THE WOOD.....	13
Todor Petkov, Panayot Panayotov	
COMPUTATION OF THE AVERAGE WOOD TEMPERATURE AND THE RATE OF ITS CHANGE DURING UNILATERAL HEATING OF FLAT SPRUCE DETAILS BEFORE THEIR BENDING .....	21
Nencho Deliiski, Neno Trichkov, Dimitar Angelski, Ladislav Dzurenda	
THE EMISSIONS EMITTED BY SPRUCE THERMOWOOD WITH AND WITHOUT SURFACE FINISHED .....	28
Daniela Tesařová, Petr Čech	
INTEGRATION OF DAMAGE DIFFERENTIALS: APPLICATION FROM THE FOREST INDUSTRY INTO THE CIVIL ENGINEERING .....	38
Stefan Stefanov	
STUDY MODULE „PROJECT WEEK“: THROUGH THE EYES OF STUDENTS .....	46
Regina Raycheva, Vassil Jivkov, Desislava Angelova, Pavlina Vodenova	
INFLUENCE OF DRYING ON DOUGLAS-FIR HEARTWOOD IMPREGNABILITY TO WATER .....	54
Mohamed Tahar Elaieb, Anélie Petrissans, Ali Elkhorchani, Rémy Marchal, Mathieu Petrissans <sup>3</sup>	
ADDITIONAL LOAD FROM RADIAL MISALIGNMENT OF SHAFTS AT THEIR COUPLING .....	63
Slavcho Sokolovski, Nelly Staneva	
POSSIBILITIES FOR OPTIMIZATION OF DISTRIBUTIVE INDICES FOR AVERAGE COSTS CALCULATION IN JOB ORDER AND SMALL SCALE SERIAL PRODUCTION .....	71
Nikolay Neykov, Anna Dobritchova, Mariela Cvetkova	
INFLUENCE OF THE TYPE OF UPHOLSTERY MATERIALS ON THE SOFTNESS OF UPHOLSTERY WITH INNER SPRING UNITS .....	76
Yancho Genchev, Teodor Lulchev, Desislava Hristodorova	
ANALYSIS OF THE DEWINGING PROCESS ON SCOTS PINE SEEDS WITH SMALL-SIZED DEWINGER .....	82
Konstantin Marinov	
QUANTITATIVE YIELDSFROM THE CUTTING OF THE STEMS OF WHITE PINE ( <i>PINUS SYLVESTRIS</i> L.), DEPENDING ON THE THICKNESS AND LENGTH OF THE DETAILS AND THEDEFCTS OF THE WOOD .....	93
Daniel Koynov	
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TRUNKS OF SCOTS PINE ( <i>PINUS SYLVESTRIS</i> ) FOR PRODUCTION OF SOLID WOOD MATERIALS .....	99
Neno Trichkov, Daniel Koynov	
SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL „INNOVATIONS IN WOODWORKING INDUSTRY AND ENGINEERING DESIGN“ .....	109