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Anne Toppinen, Heimo Karppinen & Kati Kleemola (eds.)

Rising carbon flux price and the paradox of forest-induced reduction of atmospheric carbon stock

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Reasons can be given, on both supply and demand grounds, why the price of a carbon flux into or out of the atmosphere might rise through time: such predictions are now embedded in the calculations mandated by some governments. A productive forestry cycle entails both early sequestration (at low prices) and late volatilisation (at high prices) of carbon. Hence a productive cycle might be deemed “loss-making” on its carbon account, even though in every future time period its effect on atmospheric carbon stock is beneficial. While this effect might be mitigated or reversed by discounting of carbon flux values, in practice there is debate about whether such values *should* be discounted at all. In addition, arbitrary governmental rules on what kinds of carbon flux “count” can make forest utilisation which is carbon-positive within the whole materials system appear to be carbon negative, an anomaly which is exacerbated by rising carbon price.