

Forestry and Wood Update …November 2003 - Volume 3 Number 11

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# COFORD WORKSHOP: Preparation and Sale of Hardwoods

**Anner Hotel, Dublin Road, Thurles,   
and Langley Estate, Thurles,   
on Tuesday 18 November 2003**

In response to public demand, COFORD has organised the second in a series of one day workshops on the preparation and sale of hardwoods. These workshops provide a hands-on approach to the quantification and categorisation of standing hardwoods and the optimisation of felling and sawing of felled material in preparation for sale. The workshop will consist of a morning indoor session at the Anner Hotel in Thurles at which the valuing and grading of hardwoods will be explained and discussed. This will be followed by an afternoon outdoor session at the Langley Estate, Thurles, where all aspects of managing standing and felled material will be comprehensively dealt with.



*Delegates at the workshop held at Dundrum in October watch as Gavin Munro explains the assessment of logs.*

Practical guidance will be given using a selection of logs of varying quality and species. The main presenter will be Gavin Munro, a forester with many years experience in the hardwood trade. He has specialised in the purchase, processing and sale of hardwoods since 1975. He is a member of the Scottish Hardwood Marketing Development Group and is currently working as a hardwood timber buyer with T&G Norman in Carlisle. Other speakers include Jim Kinsella of Tipperary Forestry Services Ltd and Michael Fahy.

This event is designed for forest owners and managers of broadleaved woodland as well as consultant foresters and all those working in the management of broadleaved trees. It is a recognised event under the Society of Irish Foresters’ Programme of Continuous Professional Development (CPD).

Please note that as this is a practical workshop, the group size is limited so bookings will be made on a first-come, first-served basis. For further information and bookings contact COFORD (tel: 01-7167700, email: info@coford.ie).

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# Carbon Corner

## Wood energy a good beginning, but needs a quantum leap – farmers take note

At long last a CHP plant based on wood biomass will be built and operational in Ireland. It will be based at Enniskeane, Co Cork, and is a joint initiative of Grainger Sawmills and the SWS Group (see following article). When it is up and running the plant will generate 1.8 MW of electricity which will be sold to the national grid under the sixth Alternative Energy Requirement (AER) programme. A further 3.5 MW of heat energy will be used for drying construction timber.

Carbon Corner has extolled the benefits of wood energy for the carbon economy on a number of occasions, especially the fit that it makes with the production profile of Irish forests. While the Enniskeane development is very welcome it is only a drop in the ocean of what the potential contribution of bioenergy is to renewable energy. Kevin Healion, of the Tipperary Institute, estimates in a recent report for the European Bioenergy Network[[1]](#footnote-1) that up 2400 MW of renewable energy could be generated from bioenergy sources, over time, with the vast majority coming from biomass.

In order to achieve even a fraction of this potential wood energy needs to take a quantum leap – it needs to be fostered and supported here and now at national and local levels. In this regard we need to look at both the current supports and tendering models for renewable energy. One has to question the current level of support when the six AER calls have delivered just one biomass project. Other models exist outside the current AER ‘cap and tender’ system. These need to be carefully examined, particularly in the light of the renewable procurement process review that the Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources announced recently. A recent comprehensive study conducted by COFORD on wood energy will form the basis of our submission to the review.

In line with these developments the agricultural sector should become far more pro-active in the energy and carbon abatement areas. It has the potential to move from one of the largest emitters to being a net contributor to greenhouse gas abatement through a number of strategies, such as conservation of soil carbon and the growing of energy crops. Needless to say, farmers will not grow energy crops in the absence of markets for the produce. The drivers for such markets are just beginning to come on stream, such as the proposed carbon tax and emissions trading. However, these need to be linked to land-use in a way that provides an incentive to the grower. Such linkages should be facilitated as part of the decoupling measures now underway as part of CAP reform. These will free up farmers to consider land uses such as forestry and energy crops that have a market-based commercial return.

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# Growing Green Energy - Ireland makes its mark

Ireland’s future in energy self-sufficiency was given a major boost recently when Mr Joe Walsh T.D., Minister for Agriculture and Food, announced:

* the construction of the first wood fired biomass combined heat and power (CHP) plant in Ireland; and
* the certification of the first non-state forestry company with Sustainable Forest Management.

Independent Biomass Systems, a joint venture between SWS Group and Grainger Sawmills Limited, is constructing an €8 million wood-fired biomass CHP plant to generate green energy at Grainger’s wood processing facility at Enniskeane in West Cork. As Ireland’s current energy mix is 97% dependant on non-renewable energy sources the production of biomass as an alternative energy resource is seen as a positive development.

Biomass as an energy resource in Ireland offers considerable potential as it is obtained from numerous sources including by-products from the timber industry, agricultural crops and forestry first thinnings. Furthermore biomass does not add carbon dioxide to the atmosphere as the CO2 released in burning is balanced by an equal amount removed from the air via photosynthesis when the crop is growing. Biomass therefore can play a significant role in reducing both Ireland’s carbon emissions and the “greenhouse gas” effect. This will provide a number of benefits in the context of our Kyoto compliance and EU Directives.

The new CHP plant will use wood processing co-products such as sawdust, bark and woodchips together with forest thinnings to generate heat for Grainger Sawmill’s extensive timber drying operations. By consuming sawmilling co-products on site rather than transporting them to often distant markets, energy is saved and CO2 emissions reduced. In addition, the CHP plant will produce 2 MW of green electricity, which will be sold to the national grid - enough energy to power and potentially heat over 2,000 homes.

The joint launch also announced SWS Forestry Services as the first non-state forestry company in Ireland to be certified by the Forest Stewardship Council. Achieving Sustainable Forest Management Certification requires that plantations be managed in a way that is sympathetic to both the ecosystem and the surrounding environment, without adverse economic effects. Each plantation has a long-term management plan, detailing all future management operations, and a comprehensive ecological assessment, outlining harvesting, restocking and landscape design plans.

One of the main challenges facing the forestry industry is the lack of opportunity to utilise forest thinnings. It is incumbent on companies such as SWS who have now achieved this certification to ensure that crops are managed in a professional manner. Therefore the launch of the CHP plant is not only seen as providing a green energy source but also as a valuable market for forest thinnings.

Speaking at the launch Joe Walsh T.D., Minister for Agriculture and Food, stated: “In Ireland we are heavily reliant on fossil fuels, which are not sustainable for our future growth or economy.’ He called for action to be taken across the board to reduce Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions and develop an economy less reliant on fossil fuels, such as oil and coal. It is worth noting that Ireland’s greenhouse gas emissions are among the highest per capita in the EU and we are under international pressure to meet our Kyoto commitments.

Speaking on behalf of Independent Biomass Systems, Kieran Calnan, SWS Chief Executive, noted that: ‘Bioenergy produces both heat and power and has over twice the MW energy output of wind. It is my strong belief that we have created a renewable energy model that other industries can follow to help deliver tomorrow’s energy in a sustainable way.’ This biomass project was part funded by the Renewable Energy Research Development and Demonstration Programme administered by Sustainable Energy Ireland under the National Development Plan.

William Grainger, Chief Executive of Grainger Sawmills, expressed his satisfaction at his company’s involvement in the joint venture with SWS Group. He commented: “Both organisations have comparable objectives in sustainable development, job creation and in particular their long-term commitment to the forestry industry. The building of the CHP plant in Enniskeane and the certification of SWS Forestry Services will provide both a sustainable and self-sufficient energy source for the sawmills and a stable market for sawmill co-products. This will also help to ensure the continued success of the wood processing industry in the greater Cork region”.

For further information, contact Ruth Furney, SWS Marketing Services, Shinagh House, Bandon; email [ruth.furney@sws.ie](mailto:ruth.furney@sws.ie)

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# Workshop Announcement: IEA Bioenergy Implementing Agreement Task 38 – Greenhouse Gas Balances of Biomass and Bioenergy Systems

A workshop on IEA Bioenergy Implementing Agreement: Task 38 – Greenhouse Gas Balances of Biomass and Bioenergy Systems will be held on 20 November 2003 at the offices of Sustainable Energy Ireland, at Glasnevin, Dublin 9.

Heightened awareness of the risk of climate change, and the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol and other related agreements, have greatly increased interest in reducing net greenhouse gas emissions to the atmosphere. As a result, many countries have begun to develop and implement measures to reduce/offset GHG emissions as part of their climate change mitigation strategies. Measures that encourage the use of renewable energy, promote greater energy efficiency, and enhance carbon sequestration in forest and agriculture lands are among the most widespread mitigation options.

Ireland has recently joined the International Energy Agency (IEA) Bioenergy Implementing Agreement and is participating in a number of the tasks including Task 38 ‘Greenhouse Gas Balances of Biomass and Bioenergy Systems’ (<http://www.joanneum.ac.at/iea-bioenergy-task38/>). The objectives of Task 38 are to:

* Develop, compare and make available integrated computer models and other tools for assessing greenhouse gas balances of bioenergy and carbon sequestration systems on the project, activity, and regional levels, and address scaling issues between these levels;
* Assess the life cycle greenhouse gas balance of such systems, including leakage, additionality and uncertainties;
* Make comparisons of bioenergy systems with, for example, fossil energy systems, as well as comparisons of wood products with other materials such as steel and concrete;
* Analyse the country-level and regional potential of bioenergy, forestation, and other biomass based mitigation strategies;
* Aid decision makers in selecting mitigation strategies that optimise greenhouse gas benefits;
* Assist in the implementation of forestry, land-use and bioenergy options through methodological work and development of standards for carbon accounting in the energy and land use, land use change, and forestry sectors.

The objective of the workshop is to launch Task 38 and to bring its activities to the attention of researchers, policy makers and industry stakeholders. Speakers will cover a range of topics in relation to biomass, bio-energy and greenhouse gas emissions:

* Workshop opening and welcome - Mr Morgan Bazalian, Head of Sustainable Energy Services
* Overview of IEA Bioenery Implementing Agreement - Mr Pearse Buckley, Sustainable Energy Ireland
* Ireland and the Kyoto Protocol - Mr Michael Young, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government
* Irelands Greenhouse Gas Inventory - Mr Michael McGettigan, Environmental Protection Agency
* Introduction to IEA Bioenergy Task 38 - Dr Ken Byrne, University College Dublin
* Approaches to Assessing the Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Potential of Biomass and Bioenergy Projects - Ms Carly Green, University College Dublin
* Current Understanding of Farm Level Greenhouse Gas Balances - Prof. Ger Kiely, University College Cork
* Carbon Stocks and Fluxes in Forest Ecosystems - Dr Ken Byrne, University College Dublin
* Greenhouse Gas Implications of Co-firing with Biomass in Peat Power Generation - Ms Sari Lappi, University College Dublin

If you wish to register for the conference please send an email to [kenneth.byrne@ucd.ie](mailto:kenneth.byrne@ucd.ie).

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# Woodspec Roadshow

The Woodspec Roadshow is an ideal opportunity for architects, engineers, designers, specifiers and students to learn more about wood usage and design and how best to use the manual *Woodspec – A guide to designing, detailing and specifying timber in Ireland.*

Woodspec is a comprehensive specifiers manual which promotes wood as a versatile, viable and renewable resource. It is published by the Wood Marketing Federation and reflects an increasing confidence in wood usage and design in Ireland. The guide and the accompanying CD-ROM along with the Woodspec website, hosted by COFORD at [www.coford.ie](http://www.coford.ie), provide wide-ranging information to ensure the efficient production of precise specifications in relation to the appropriate use of timber. The 300-page guide provides a challenge to specialists to use wood creatively and is the first guide of its kind in Ireland. COFORD produced and maintains the *Woodspec* website and offers a complementary free advice service on timber specification.

Although *Woodspec* is designed with the specialist in mind, its clear, accessible format has attracted a wide audience. It is mainly aimed, however, at architects, engineers, designers and other specifiers. The Wood Marketing Federation is also conscious of its educational value and has been promoting it to relevant third level colleges.

The Roadshow will include talks from members of the *Woodspec* production team and a presentation on how to use the guide on the COFORD website. The presentation will be followed by a question and answer session. The Roadshow will take place on Tuesday 18 November at the University of Limerick (12.30 – 2.00 p.m.) and at the Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology, on the same day at 7.00 – 9.00 p.m. A complementary copy of the Woodspec guide will be available for architects, engineers, specifiers and lecturers at each Roadshow.

If you are interested in attending the Roadshow at either of the venues, please contact COFORD, Agriculture Building, UCD, Belfield, Dublin 4. Tel: 01 716 7700 Fax: 01 716 1180 Email: [admin@coford.ie](mailto:admin@coford.ie)

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# Eurocode 5: Timber Construction

**Eurocode 5 – Design of timber structures** is one of a suite of ten eurocodes, mandated by the European Commission through CEN (European Committee for Standardisation), in the context of the Construction Products Directive – 89/106/EEC. Eurocode 5 (EC5) referenced as EN 1995 is in three parts as follows:

1995-1-1: General rules and rules for buildings

1995-1-2: General and rules for structural fire design

1995-2: General and rules for design of bridges

Each of these parts of EC5 is subject to the rules of EN 1990 which is the Basis of Structural Design for all eurocodes and to seven parts of Eurocode 1 (1991) in respect of actions due to self weight, imposed loads, traffic loads, snow loads, wind loads, accidental loads and actions during construction. Each eurocode part is supported by reference to normative CEN standards, of which there are more than fifty within EC5 alone.

The three parts of EC5 have been forwarded to CEN management centre (CMC), following approval by the national delegations of EU member states at CEN/TC 250 SC5, for progress to formal vote (FV) stage. This process is expected to take place during February-April 2004. A positive outcome is expected and on that basis EC5 could be published by CEN in EN form and forwarded to NSAI, thus requiring the issue of IS EN 1995 (in three parts) during December 2004. National Annexes are required to be included in each part at the time of publication by NSAI. Eurocode 5 and its supporting standards will replace national design codes and standards throughout EU member states.

*Item submitted by James J. Harrington, Chairman Timber Standards Consultative Committee. James Harrington and Associates are project leaders in the COFORD-funded project ECDesign. This project is nearing completion and will provide a users’ manual based on EC5. This will greatly facilitate the use of timber in construction.*

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# EUFORGEN Fourth Conifers Network Meeting

The European Forest Genetic Resources Programme (EUFORGEN) created the Norway spruce network in 1995 with the main aim of promoting the maintenance of a broad genetic variation in the species in order to ensure the necessary evolutionary adaptability to a changing environment over many future generations. At a subsequent meeting, it was agreed to widen the scope of this network to include all European conifers since the number of native coniferous tree species in Europe is rather low when compared to the same latitudes in Asia and North America. In terms of collective species, without splitting into subspecies and varieties, the total number is around 25, of which only 10 have fairly wide distribution and commercial value as forest trees.

The fourth meeting of this network took place in Pitlochry in Scotland from 18 to 20 October, with a general theme of *The role of gene conservation in exotic conifers in Europe*.

The meeting was attended by delegates from twenty-seven European countries including Ireland, which was represented by John Fennessy of COFORD. The meeting was opened by Sam Samuel (Head Tree Improvement, Forest Research). He welcomed the delegates to Scotland and gave a short presentation on forestry in Scotland and the UK. After Prof. C. Matyas, Chairman of the Network, formally opened the proceedings, J. Koskela, the new EUFORGEN Coordinator, presented an update on developments in EUFORGEN since his appointment on 1 January 2003. For the first time Iceland participated. . All participating countries presented progress reports and updates. This was followed by sessions on:

* Progress reports on Network activities,
* Meetings projects and other initiatives,
* Documentation, information and public awareness sessions,
* Seminar on conservation and use of exotic conifers.

The meeting included a field visit to a number of sites in Dunkeld – hybrid larch, Craigvinean forest – continuous cover forestry, Ledmore research forest - seed orchards and clone banks, and concluded with a visit to Blair Castle – Diana’s Grove, a collection of exotic conifers of exceptional size and established over one hundred years ago. The meeting finished with the adoption by all participants of a summary of the meeting.

For further information on this meeting or on the activities of EUFORGEN visit their website at [www.ipgri.cgiar.org](http://www.ipgri.cgiar.org)

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# South Yorkshire Biodiversity Research Group and Network Conference

An international conference on “The Ecology and Management of *Rhododendron ponticum* - an invasive alien or a neglected native?” will be held from 3 to 5 June 2004, at the Sheffield Hallam University, City Campus, Sheffield, UK.

This three day international conference raises issues and topics in relation to the ecology and management of *Rhododendron ponticum* both as an invasive and problematic alien and as a native species, rare and threatened in many of its natural locations. Consideration will also be given to issues and case studies and comparisons will be made with other species. Key themes of the conference are:

* Ecology, physiology and toxicity
* Genetics, taxonomy and international status
* Relationship to other Rhododendrons – what can we learn?
* Conservation and management – impacts on fauna and flora
* Native and alien status and invasive spread
* Economic impact
* History and garden development
* Public perception

Further information can be obtained from the website: [www.shu.ac.uk](http://www.shu.ac.uk)

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# BioIreland 2004 'Stepping Stones to Success'

The second All-Island Biotechnology Conference, BioIreland 2004 'Stepping Stones to Success' will take place from 20 to 22 June 2004, in Coleraine, Northern Ireland.

Following on from the highly successful BioIreland 2002 conference in Dublin, BioIreland 2004 will attract over 350 delegates from the island of Ireland, UK, USA, Europe and Asia. A range of international and local speakers in the areas of healthcare, food/agriculture and enabling technologies will address the conference and provide an update on the trends affecting the biotechnology industry.

Registration, exhibition and sponsorship details as well as a regularly updated programme can be found at: [www.bioireland2004.com](http://www.bioireland2004.com). For further information contact the Conference Co-ordinators, Project Planning International at [bioireland2004@project-planning.com](mailto:bioireland2004@project-planning.com).

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# Congress and Exhibition: Forest IT 2004 in the Mobile Environment

This congress and exhibition will take place on 1 and 2 September 2004, at Jyväskylä and Jämsänkoski, Finland. The event will deal with topics such as forest planning, data collection and GIS, wood measurement, forest operations management, environmental monitoring, and other applications in the mobile environment. The Forest IT Exhibition will allow foresters and forest industry experts to explore, evaluate and fully utilise the potential of IT systems and technologies. For further information email: [forestit@finpro.fi](mailto:forestit@finpro.fi) or visit [www.ForestIT.net](http://www.ForestIT.net).

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1. <http://www.vtt.fi/virtual/afbnet/ireland_biosurvey.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)