

Forestry and Wood Update

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# National Forest Strategy: A vision for the future

This conference will be held on 12 March 2004 at the Johnstown House hotel, Enfield, Co Meath.

For the past eight years the Irish forest industry has operated under the government strategy set out in *Growing for the Future*. The operating environment in which the forest and forest products sectors now compete has changed dramatically since the strategy was launched in 1996. It is against this background that the Department of Agriculture announced a strategy review to take place during 2004.

All sectors of the industry have welcomed the review. However, not only strategic change is needed, but a strong and integrated implementation plan is also required.

This conference aims to inform the debate and process around the review. Speakers will focus on the role that the forest and forest products sectors can play in a modern Irish economy. They will comment on how a strategy for a long-term business such as forestry can and should be formulated and executed to ensure that the returns on private capital and State investment are optimised.

The event is targeted at professionals within the industry, policy and regulation makers, forest owners, environmentalists and those involved with related sectors.

The conference will be chaired by Mr Michael Dowling, Head of Agri-Strategy, AIB Bank, and Mr Ciarán FitzGerald, Director, Irish Business and Employers Confederation. Presentations will include:

• *Finnish Forest Vision - formulating and resourcing the national strategy* by Dr Aarne Reunala, Director General, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Finland;

• *Delivering the Scottish Vision* by Mr Cedric Wilkins, Director, Forest Industries Cluster, Scotland;

• *Creating a Vision - lessons from other industries* by Mr Frank O’Dea, Global Managing Partner, Accenture;

• *Internalising the Externalities - a key component of future forest strategies* by Prof. Frank Convery, Heritage Trust Professor of Environmental Studies, UCD.

This conference is co-hosted by IFIC (Irish Forest Industry Chain), COFORD, ITGA (Irish Timber Growers’ Association) and SIF (Society of Irish Foresters). Eight SIF Continuous Professional Development (CPD) points are allocated to this event

Download a registration form and information pamphlet at [www.coford.ie/conferences/conf-12-03-04.pdf](http://www.coford.ie/conferences/conf-12-03-04.pdf)

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# Managing our broadleaf resource to produce quality hardwood timber

This COFORD seminar will take place on 15 and 16 April 2004, at the Duhallow Park Hotel, Kanturk, Co Cork. It is a continuation of the programme of workshops on growing and managing broadleaved woodland and the measurement, grading and marketing of hardwood timber.

In recent years there has been an increasing trend towards planting broadleaves. The broadleaf resource is rapidly increasing, and this pattern is likely to be sustained given current government policy.

Hardwood harvest volumes are currently less than 20,000 m3 per annum. However, as volumes increase, accurately measuring, grading and valuing hardwood assumes greater importance. And while Irish-grown hardwoods have been used for lower value end uses, recent improvements in technology offer potential to service more demanding markets. This workshop brings together a group of specialists from Ireland and the UK, all experts in their fields.

 The first day will focus on the establishment and management of broadleaves in the early years. A number of sites will be visited to illustrate formative pruning and tending and their impact on crop quality. The following day will concentrate on the preparation, measuring, grading and presentation of hardwood lots. Practical guidance will be given on the do’s and dont’s of measuring and grading hardwood.

The event is aimed at owners and managers of broadleaved woodland, whether recently established or close to maturity as well as consultant foresters and all those working in the management of broadleaves who wish to produce quality timber.

This is a recognised event under the Society of Irish Foresters’ Programme of Continuous Professional Development (CDP).

Chaired by Sir Charles Colthurst (ITGA Chairman) and Prof. Jack Gardiner (UCD), the programme includes the following presentations:

Day 1:

• *Opening address* David Nevins, Chairman COFORD;

• *Introduction* John Fennessy, COFORD;

• *Establishing broadleaves – problems and possibilities* Brian O’Mahony, Forest Service;

• *Recent findings from experimentation with broadleaves* Ted Horgan, Coillte;

• *Producing quality broadleaves - the UK experience* Dr Peter Savill, Oxford Forestry Institute;

• *Management of broadleaves: shaping, tending and thinning* Michael Bulfin, Teagasc;

• Field visit, with kind permission of the landowners, to:

i) Kilcaskan South property – ash stand,

ii) Ballymaquirk Property – oak/Scots pine mixed stand; sycamore stand; ash stand.

Day 2:

• *Hardwood timber sales: - Preparation and presentation of woodlots, and Valuing and grading of hardwoods* Gavin Munro, T&G Norman, Carlisle;

• *Discussion on introduction of pilot sales system* Joe O’Carroll, COFORD;

• Field visit to demonstrate measuring grading and valuing hardwood timber at roadside, and grading and valuing standing trees.

Download the booking form and information pamphlet from [www.coford.ie/conferences/conf-15-04-04.pdf](http://www.coford.ie/conferences/conf-15-04-04.pdf)

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# Future issues for forest industries in Europe

Considerable interest has been expressed in this special Forestry/Wood Products event to be held at the Alexander Hotel, Dublin, from 28 April to 1 May 2004. InnovaWood and COFORD have joined forces to arrange the conference and field trip to highlight issues facing the future of the European Forest-Wood Chain. The agenda includes sessions on:

• European policy in relation to forest-based industries;

• Integrated forestry-wood chain;

• Biomass – feedstock for energy generation or panelboard production;

• Innovation in wood products;

• Education and training in the forest-based industries sector - influencing the future.

The conference will overlap with the COST Technical Committee meeting (for members only).

The conference will be followed by a choice of field trips to either a forest nursery and a forest management site, or a sawmill and/or panelboard mill on Saturday 1 May.

Full details and registration forms are available at www.coford.ie/Conf2004/conference.htm. To request further information on the event, contact InnovaWood or COFORD.

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# Ireland's Native Woodland Conference

Woodlands of Ireland is co-ordinating Ireland's first Native Woodland Conference to be held at Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology, from 8 to 11 September 2004.

The Woodlands of Ireland group was established in 1998 to represent all those with an interest in native woodlands, including ENGOs, foresters, ecologists and statutory bodies. Since then, it has been at the forefront of native woodland conservation in Ireland through initiatives such as the People’s Millennium Forest Project and aiding in the development of the Forest Service Native Woodland Scheme. (The Native Woodland Scheme serves to protect, enhance and expand Ireland’s native woodland resource and its associated biodiversity.)

 Once covering most of the island of Ireland, surviving fragments of native woodland today comprise less than 1% of the country’s land area. Without continuing active management and protection, this valuable part of our natural heritage will fast become a fading legacy.

The theme of the Native Woodland Conference is *The past, present and future of Ireland’s Native Woodlands*. It is aimed at landowners, foresters, ecologists, researchers, students, policy makers and native woodland stakeholders, and the programme includes presentations in the themes:

• The background to native woodland development in Ireland;

• The ecology and current status of Ireland’s native woodlands;

• Legal framework and policy development;

• Current initiatives in the development of Ireland’s native woodlands;

• The future development of Ireland’s native woodlands.

For the full programme, visit <http://www.woodlandsofireland.com/events.htm>

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# CARBON CORNER

## Making biomass energy work

National renewable energy policy is under review by the Department of Communications Marine and Natural Resources. As part of the process it has published a study which considers possible increases in Ireland’s green energy output between now and 2020. Target levels for green electricity are suggested at 13.2 - 20% for the year 2010, and 15-30% by 2020.

In the course of a submission to the review process COFORD has pointed out the significant contribution that wood biomass can make to the achievement of these targets. The submission goes on to address a number of policy related issues.

The best way to secure the future for biomass-derived-energy in Ireland is to internalise the unpriced externalities associated with energy generation. These include negative externalities associated with fossil fuel usage and the positive externalities associated with renewable energy resources. The Emissions Trading Directive and carbon taxation are key instruments to price the externalities. However, the draft national allocation plan does little to encourage or force fuel switching. An emissions allocation closer to the 80% level previously foreseen rather than the proposed 98% allocation would have driven a switch to renewable energy and a displacement of imported fossil fuel.

Carbon taxation is yet to be finalised but it should favour wood biomass over fossil fuels. However, consumers have no way of choosing renewable electricity over so-called brown electricity under current market arrangements. Therefore, the carbon tax will be viewed by the public as just another form of taxation. Income generated from carbon taxation should be ring-fenced to support the introduction and expansion of renewable energy technologies and other carbon beneficial activities, such as afforestation.

The continued use of a best new entrant (BNE) price as the criterion for awarding renewable energy supply contracts is open to question. BNE price is based on the power production cost from gas-fired combined cycle gas turbine. However, it is far from feasible that all new power would be generated by this technology. Indeed, the calculation of BNE price is based purely on the financial cost of energy production and does not look at any of the externalities such as security of supply (much of the gas supply over the longer term will be sourced from eastern Europe), greenhouse gas emissions, and rises in the real cost of gas.

While it is made clear in the supporting document to the consultation that the focus is on electricity only, this is a fundamental flaw of the AER programme. If the ultimate aim of promoting renewables is to clean the environment then green heat has as much value as green electricity. In fact, there is a clear need for integrated support structures and policy across the whole renewables sector – electricity, heat and liquid biofuels.

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# We are 100 years old!

*Niall OCarroll, former Chief Inspector of the Forest Service, is currently putting the finishing touches to a book* ***A Concise History of Irish Forestry****. COFORD will publish it in the autumn, as one of the events to mark the centenary of Irish forestry. Here he writes a short note about when state forestry began in this country.*

Two events of importance to Irish forestry happened in 1904. The best known is the opening that October of Avondale House as a school of forestry. The other was the birth of Seán MacBride who, as a cabinet Minister, was the moving influence behind the new forest policy in 1948 which set a planting target of one million acres at the rate of 10,000 acres a year.

Avondale started with eight ‘apprentices’, and its purpose was to produce working foresters for Irish estates. A.C. Forbes took charge in 1906 and began the laying out of acre plots of a variety of tree species to test their suitability for large-scale forestry in Ireland. Many of those plots remain standing.

Avondale was later to train foresters for the Irish state Forest Service and continued to do so until the 1960s, when the house was reconstituted as a residential forestry extension school.

Avondale has been referred to, with some justification, as the cradle of Irish Forestry.

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# Ireland announces key CO2 allocation decisions

Irish Environment Minister Martin Cullen recently announced a set of key decisions on Ireland’s national allocation plan (NAP) under the EU emissions trading scheme (ETS). As expected, Irish industry must cut CO2 emissions, but will be assisted by the Government, who will buy credits through the international market.

The Irish Government decided to allocate CO2 emissions allowances of 22.5 million tonnes (Mt) each year to the roughly 100 Irish installations participating in the EU ETS for the period 2005-2007. According to Abyd Karmali at ICF Consulting, who contributed to the Irish NAP, this correlates to approximately 96-98 per cent of projected emissions after consideration of abatement action taken.

Ireland has also set an indicative cap for the second phase of the EU ETS, the 2008-2012 period, at 110.1 Mt. This is only slightly less than during the first phase, but in addition, the Government said it is interested in purchasing approximately 18.5 Mt from the international markets. This would be through CDM projects in developing countries, JI projects in Central and Eastern European countries, and from other developed nations under the Kyoto emissions trading regime.

At least 97% of the allowances will be allocated freely, with the EPA auctioning 1% to cover its administrative costs. Like the UK, Ireland has decided that it will not allow banking of allowances between the two phases of the EU ETS. A reserve of 1-2 % of allowances will be set aside for new entrants.

Ireland has not yet finished the installation-level allocation, but this is expected to follow shortly.

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# New timber testing facility at NUI Galway

NUI Galway recently celebrated the commissioning of new timber testing machines in its Timber Engineering Laboratory. These machines were acquired from Enterprise Ireland by the Department of Civil Engineering. The equipment includes two Dartec testing machines with static load capacities of 500 kN and 250 kN, respectively. They are capable of testing in tension, compression and bending and have a dynamic test capability. The larger machine has a test bed which accommodates spans of up to 7 m with a daylight of 3 m. In addition, the laboratory has acquired a Cook Bolinder Timber Stress Grading Machine.

The acquisition of this equipment marks a very significant increase in the research and testing capability of the department with respect to timber and engineered wood products. Postgraduate research work has commenced under the direction of Dr Annette Harte on the use of fibre-reinforced plastics for the reinforcement and repair of timber structures. A number of undergraduate research projects are also currently underway.

The Timber Engineering Laboratory will work with the Irish timber industry to identify key research areas for the future. The laboratory also has the capability to provide a testing facility for the timber industry.

For further information, email: annette.harte@nuigalway.ie

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# Minister announces relaunch of forestry support schemes

Speaking at the Coillte Annual Conference, Mr Joe Walsh T.D., Minister for Agriculture and Food, announced that funding of over €6m is available for the forestry support schemes.

According to the Minister, this is further evidence of the Government’s commitment to the continued development of the forestry sector. Already the Government Estimate in 2004 has been increased by some 31% above the 2003 Estimate.

On a personal note, the Minister said that he very much welcomed the return of forestry to his Department. He is convinced of the considerable potential for forestry as a viable land use option.

Since assuming responsibility, from the beginning of the year, he has taken a number of important initiatives. These include:

* A study to assess possibilities for the continued strategic development of the sector.
* Bilateral discussions with Commissioner Fischler on the implications for forestry and the Single Payment Entitlements. The Minister remains confident of a successful outcome.
* The speedy issue of planting approvals by his Department. There has been a heartening renewal of interest in planting and the Minister is confident that his planting target of at least 10,000 hectares will be achieved.

The support schemes are, according to the Minister, an essential element of the overall forestry programme. They are also critical in terms of meeting Partnership commitments, our ongoing commitment to those who have already planted and most importantly in terms of the need to maintain and enhance existing plantations.

In re-launching the schemes the Minister referred in particular to the Roads, Reconstitution, Native Woodland and Neighbour Wood Schemes. These schemes will be available on a more focused and targeted basis to ensure value for money for the taxpayer.

The Roads scheme will be targeted at forest owners who intended to carry out thinning of plantations in the immediate future. The Reconstitution scheme will be available to facilitate replanting particularly by those who suffered losses last year from the increased number of forest fires.

The Minister said that the increased allocation for the support schemes is another part of the building blocks for the continued development of the forestry sector. They also represent clear evidence of his and Government commitment to the sector.

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# The Forest Soils Project: a new national resource

The Forest Soils Project at Kinsealy has been completed with digital datasets being handed over to the Forest Service. Datasets on soil parent material (surface drift geology), landcover (a satellite interpreted vegetation map), a soils map and a forest productivity map have been developed for each county. Counties can be seamlessly joined to form a national dataset. The project provides vital scientific information to ensure balanced, productive and sustainable development for the expanding afforestation programme.

The main purpose of the project is to provide the basic datasets to allow the Forest Service to develop an Indicative Forest Strategy (IFS) in consultation with local authorities. These datasets will become available, initially on a limited basis, to interested parties in forestry, local authorities, universities and consultants.

Soils vary greatly in quality over even very small distances; this project has classified soil variation right across the country. It used the latest computer technology for satellite image processing, air photo interpretation combined with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) processing. The project had use of one of the most comprehensive ranges of national spatial digital datasets in the country. It should be noted that this is a soil classification not a soil survey. Soils are not classified into Great Soil Groups or soil series.

It is particularly appropriate that this study is being undertaken by Teagasc, which is the repository of the National Soil Survey soil archives, which were compiled both by Teagasc, and before it by An Foras Talúntais – the Agricultural Research Institute. Michael Bulfin and a team of scientists with skills in drift geology, remote sensing, ecology, GIS, as well as in soils and forestry worked on the project at Kinsealy.

A customised GIS was used to analyse the relationships between various datasets including parent material, topography, climate and vegetation. The method adopted by the project was to determine what soils are present by examining those factors of a site that contribute to soil formation. These datasets were used as an aid to inferring and mapping soil distribution using a classification system appropriate to forest productivity. This soil layer was then used with a range of other environmental parameters such as elevation, exposure and climate, as well as detailed information on forestry performance data to develop a national forest productivity ranking based on our most economically important species – Sitka spruce.

Following identification of the soil classes a forest productivity ranking was developed on a national scale. This productivity ranking required considerable field measurement of stands of Sitka spruce growing on each of the soil classes. Such a productivity ranking will allow decisions about the location of new plantations to be made on a firm scientific basis. The practical aim of the project is to put ‘the right trees in the right places’ by linking forest productivity to soil quality and environmental conditions.

These datasets provide a strategic tool that will ensure that afforestation will proceed with the utmost concern to environmental issues and in a manner compatible with sustainable development. The Forest Service's significant investment in this system is indicative of its commitment to carry out its responsibilities in a manner compatible with enhancing the environment and our natural landscapes.

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# How to Write A Competitive Proposal For Framework (FP6)

Enterprise Ireland will be holding a one-day training course on *How to write a competitive proposal for Framework FP6*. The course presenter is Dr Sean McCarthy, Hyperion Ltd. It will take place on Thursday, 11 March 2004, from 9.00 am to 4.00 pm, at Rochestown Park Hotel, Rochestown Road, Douglas, Cork, and admission is free.

The aim of the course is to train research managers and administrators in writing professional and competitive proposals for the Sixth Framework Programme. The course describes the relevance of the Sixth Framework programme to EU policies, the common problems in proposal writing, and the success criteria for proposals. It provides tips on how to collect information, how to select strategic partners and how to avoid duplication in proposal writing. The final section describes a strategy for proposal writing.

The course will be of particular interest to companies wishing to participate in the Framework Programme. Places are limited and will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. For further information, email: anne-marie.daly@enterprise-ireland.com, or visit [www.fp6-ireland.com](http://www.fp6-ireland.com)

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# International BioEnergy Fair 2004

This event will be held from 1 to 4 April 2004 at Lons le Saunier, France. It is billed as the ‘only fair entirely dedicated to wood energy since 1998’, and will showcase a variety of products and activities including: barbecues, woodcutting, automatic boilers, firewood boilers, wood chippers, planning and design, forestry, ovens, cookers, wood fuels, fireplaces and stoves, district heating, saws, log splitters, transport and handling, smoke ducts, training and research.

The wood energy 2004 innovation contest is open to any exhibitor and to any structure represented by an exhibitor and aims at promoting an especially innovating equipment or service.
Lectures, forums and round table conferences will address such topics as:

* Project of a quality label for woodchips
* Perspectives of the carbon exchange market for wood energy
* The electricity production from wood in Europe: panorama of incentive policies
* Financial balance of 15 years of wood energy installations management in municipality utility
* Firewood logs sales and distribution
* Firewood logs boilers: meet quality requirements
* Wood pellets: a promising market, complementary to those of firewood logs and woodchips
* The bi-energy solar-wood: panorama of solutions

For further information, visit [www.itebe-expo.org](http://www.itebe-expo.org)

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# Community Forestry: Principles and Practices Today

An introductory training course on *Community Forestry: Principles and Practices Today* will be held from 7 to 25 June 2004, in Bangkok, Thailand. This course covers all key issues related to community forestry and brings together experiences in community forestry development from across the region to highlight common approaches to support local forest management.

Regional Community Forestry Training Centre for Asia and the Pacific (RECOFTC) is an international organisation that works in close collaboration with partner organisations to actively support community forestry in the region. The vision is that livelihoods of local people in Asia and the Pacific are improved through greater access and control over forest resources on which they depend, and they have the ability to exercise their rights to sustainably manage these resources in a supportive policy and institutional environment. RECOFTC designs and facilitates learning processes and systems that support the development of capacities of all actors interested in strengthening local forest management regimes. RECOFTC also aims to promote dialogues between different stakeholders to enhance the sustainable and equitable management of forest resources. It has conducted numerous community forestry related courses, workshops, seminars and study tours, and produced a variety of complementary training materials. Over the last two decades, the interdependent linkages between forest resource management policy and the livelihoods of rural people who depend on forest resources have been widely recognised. Experience gained during this period has shown that effective forest management strategies can and do involve local communities at all levels of the decision-making process. Today, community forestry has become a mainstream component of many national forestry programmes. However, several countries that have introduced community forestry concepts are still struggling with the complex challenges of adapting their forestry programmes to be more responsive and relevant to the needs and interests of communities.

For further information, contact: Regional Community Forestry Training Centre for Asia and the Pacific, Kasetsart University, P.O. Box 1111, Bangkok 10903, Thailand. For more information about RECOFTC and other training courses, visit www.recoftc.org, or email contact@recoftc.org

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# Publication on Wood-Based Materials

The publication *Lignovisionen Issue 4: Proceedings of the International Symposium on Wood-Based Materials – Wood Composites and Chemistry* is now available.

The symposium was organised by the Competence Centre for Wood Composites and Wood Chemistry ‘Wood Kplus’ in co-operation with the Cost Action 13 – Wood Adhesion and Glued Products – in Vienna, September 2002. The proceedings comprise five keynote lectures and 27 presentations, and well as 30 posters with the following topics:

* Wood modification and processing
* Adhesives and gluing
* Compound materials and glued products
* Wood chemistry and biotechnology

If you are interested in acquiring a copy of this new publication, write to
Institut für Holzforschung an der Universität für Bodenkultur Wien, Gregor Mendel Staße 33, A1180, Wien.

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