.

Forestry and Wood Update

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# Plant quality conference

While the substantial programmes of upland afforestation carried out by the state sector in the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s have declined in recent years, afforestation by the private sector has grown rapidly. Forest nurseries play a key role in support of this programme.

Changes in forest policies and an increase in the availability of better quality lowland sites for forestry development have resulted in increased planting of broadleaf species. The nursery sector has had to change to cater for the diverse mix of species required for this market.

Nurseries in Ireland currently produce about 70-75 million plants annually. While the majority of production continues to be barerooted stock, there is likely to be an increase in demand for containerized stock as the trend towards mechanization of planting continues. Overall, the importance of plant quality in the production process is essential.

Plant quality can be defined as the fitness of plants to establish and grow well following outplanting from the nursery. Planting sites vary in terms of soil type, local climate and level of exposure; in the type and intensity of site preparation used; and the likely severity of competing vegetation. Therefore, the most suitable stock type may vary with expected site conditions and time of year in which the planting takes place.

To address these issues, COFORD has assembled a group of world-renowned scientists and practitioners to present the most up-to-date information available on this important area.

 The prospective value of our future forests very much depends on the quality of the planting stock used during establishment. This conference will be of interest to anyone connected to the forest nursery or forest establishment sector or others who may be considering planting or restocking of their land in the future. The conference will also be of interest to those involved in the amenity and Christmas tree sectors. The programme includes the following presentations:

* Applying the target seedling concept to nursery plant quality
*Dr Tom D Landis, USDA Forest Service*
* Reaping what you sow - seeds and plant quality
 *Dr Conor O’Reilly, UCD & Pat Doody, Coillte*
* Weed and pest control in nursery production and their impact on plant quality *Dr Heinrich Lösing, Germany*
* The role of tree improvement in plant production and quality
*Dr David Thompson, Coillte*
* Practical management of quality in nursery production
*John Kavanagh, None-so-Hardy Nurseries*
* Improvement of plant quality through nursery research and added value *Pat Long, Coillte*
* A Canadian approach to evaluating effects of lifting, handling and storage on plant quality
*Dr Steve Colombo, Centre for Northern Forest Ecosystem Research, Canada*
* Integrating establishment practices and plant quality
*Dr Mike Perks and Alan Harrison, Forestry Commission, UK*
* Forest Service requirements for nursery stock
*John Connelly, Forest Service*
* Plant quality - what the grower needs
*John O’Reilly, Greenbelt Ltd*
* Containerised plants and mechanised planting - the way forward?
*Dr Mick Keane, Coillte*

In addition to the presentations visits have been arranged to Coillte’s Ballintemple nursery and the containerised nursery and vegetative propagation unit at Aughrim.

Registration forms are available from [www.coford.ie/seminars2005/PQ-brochure.pdf](http://www.coford.ie/seminars2005/PQ-brochure.pdf). If you wish to find out more about the event, please contact John Fennessy at COFORD, 01-2130725 or email: john.fennessy@coford.ie.

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# Forest biodiversity conference

Interest in biodiversity has grown tremendously over the last decade both through the international conventions on Biodiversity and Climate Change) and the National Biodiversity Plan. In addition, EC Directives and Regulations in number of areas address biodiversity issues directly and indirectly. Biodiversity has a number of roles, from aesthetic and recreational, to providing food, medicines, and building materials. It also has a supportive function, including the various ecosystem functions that support and drive soil fertility, water quality, plant and animal decomposition, biogeochemical cycles, etc. Knowledge of the nature and extent of biodiversity and how it is affected by human activities is thus vital to sustainable development, and indeed to life.

BIOFOREST is a large-scale research project, which has been running from 2001 to 2005, with the aim of providing much-needed basic information on biodiversity in Irish plantation forests. The project was funded under the National Development Plan by COFORD and the EPA, as part of their RTDI Programmes.

The BIOFOREST project set out to focus on forest biodiversity with the following three sub-projects:

* Biodiversity assessment of afforestation sites;
* Assessment of biodiversity at different stages of the forest cycle;
* Investigation of experimental methods to enhance biodiversity in plantation forests.

Together these projects contribute to a picture of biodiversity in a spectrum of Irish plantation forests and show how this is affected by previous land cover, land use and current management methods.

This conference will be a platform to present the findings of this research, and highlight the recommendations arising from the results. The aim is to provide direction for future biodiversity policy in relation to forestry development in Ireland. Presentations will be set in the context of international developments in the area, with keynote presentations from local and international experts.

The conference will provide an opportunity for networking and discussion, bringing together academics, researchers, policy makers, practitioners and anyone interested in maintaining and enhancing the biodiversity of Irish plantation forests. In addition to the presentations, the event will include a demonstration of the BIOFOREST database, a field visit showing biodiversity change throughout the forest cycle, as well as a poster session.

The conference will take place on 26 and 27 October 2005 at the Heritage Hotel, Portlaoise, Co Laois. To register for the event of for further enquires, please email COFORD at info@coford.ie or telephone 01-2130725. Details of the programme will be available in due course on the COFORD [www.coford.ie](http://www.coford.ie), and on the EPA websites [www.epa.ie](http://www.epa.ie). .

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# CARBON CORNER

## New estimates of Irish afforestation sink under Article 3.3 of the Kyoto protocol

Further results from the COFORD-funded CARBiFOR project have shown the biomass expansion factors (ratio of above and below tree biomass to commercial wood volume) used for reporting carbon stocks can be substantially increased in line with the IPCC *Good Practice Guidance for Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry*. The underlying scientific basis for the work has been submitted for publication by Brian Tobin, a member of the CARBiFOR team.

Based on this new information, and further work by Dr Kevin Black and Dr Gerhardt Gallagher on biomass pools (above and below ground biomass, deadwood and litter), and afforestation scenarios, new estimates of the forestry sink under Article 3.3 of the Kyoto Protocol have been developed using the CARBWARE model (for a description refer to previous *Carbon Corners*).

The level of the forestry sink is, of course, directly and functionally related to the level of afforestation. Uptake of afforestation grant aid (a policy measure under the EC Rural Development Regulation) is critically dependent on the its level (as there are other options farmers can exercise). Under the current regulation the level is set at 100% of costs. The new regulation sets a ceiling of 80%, though this can be increased to 100% by individual Member States.

Based on these considerations four afforestation level scenarios[[1]](#footnote-1) have been developed:

1. the level of grant aid remaining at 80% - 3,000 ha/annum,
2. the level of afforestation under the current programme – business-as-usual - 14,000 ha/annum,
3. current government policy - 20,000 ha/annum and
4. if a policy to make up the shortfall of the current afforestation programme were introduced - 26,000 ha/annum.

Based on these four, and adding in carbon stock increases due to afforestation to date, net changes in carbon stocks in Kyoto 3.3 forest, to the end of the third commitment period (2022) have been estimated (Table 1). Changes are based on net carbon stocks, after land use change and harvesting emissions have been removed. The additional carbon pools indicated have not been added in, but they add about 6% overall to the stock change (the main reason being that CARBWARE can now decay these pools over a longer period of time).

**Table 1**: Estimated net changes in above- and below ground carbon stocks in Kyoto Article3.3 forests in Ireland over three commitment periods, based on increasing levels of afforestation over the period 2007-2013.

|  | Commitment period |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Afforestation* *scenario**ha/year* *2007-2013* | 2008-2012 | 2013-2017 | 2018-2022 | Total |
| *Mt CO2* |
| *3,000* | 11.5 | 9.3 | 7.8 | 28.6 |
| *14,000* | 13.7 | 14.4 | 15.8 | 43.9 |
| *20,000* | 15.0 | 17.2 | 20.1 | 52.3 |
| *26,000* | 16.7 | 19.1 | 22.0 | 57.8 |

Putting these figures into perspective, the overall reduction in emissions signalled in the National Climate Change Strategy is around 15.4 million tonnes of carbon dioxide per year, over the first commitment period. Forests, on a business-as-usual scenario, can therefore be expected to contribute up to 18% of this reduction. A reduction in the level of afforestation to just 3,000 ha per annum will reduce the sink potential contribution to 15%, or over 400,000 t carbon dioxide per annum, over the first commitment period.

Costs of complying with Kyoto will be a function of the cost of purchasing credits on the international market. Since the last time *Carbon Corner* dealt with this issue carbon prices have reached more than three times the €10/tonne carbon dioxide figure that was quoted back then. More recently, the price has come back to around €20/tonne. Assuming a business-as-usual scenario the value of the sink could, therefore, be in the region of €274 million over the first commitment period alone.

The sink estimate will be revised as more information from national and international research becomes available. A further key development will be the completion of the first phase of the national forest inventory which will provide improved estimates of forest productivity and species composition. Final estimates must, however, be submitted during the commitment period, and these will form the basis for any issuance of removal units (equivalent to one tonne of carbon dioxide), which can be used to comply with national emission targets. Issuance is dependent on verification and scrutiny by international review teams appointed by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

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# Visit to BOGFOR and CARBiFOR field trials

On 27 July members of the COFORD team attended a day of field visits to sites used in the BOGFOR and CARBiFOR projects.

The BOGFOR programme was initiated in 1998 to address problems associated with the cutaway peatland forestry programme in Ireland and to develop new approaches to afforestation and management of Bord na Móna cutaway bogs. Mechanical peat harvesting has been carried out on a commercial basis in Ireland for many decades and extends to an area of over 80,000 ha. The potential of this land for forestry is unique in terms of its scale, and the opportunities and challenges it presents.

The BOGFOR visit was led by Florence Renou, Project Manager, Forest Ecosystem Research Group of the Department of Environmental Resources, UCD. A number of experiments, mainly species trials, were visited, including a number of trials (Sitka spruce, Norway spruce and oak established in 2000 under naturally regenerated birch and all doing exceptionally well) at Tumduff property. A recently established willow plantation for biomass production was also visited as was a large species demonstration area covering a range of 14 species, also at Tumduff. Next, the group went to a demonstration area at Blackwater, close to the Shannon and monastic settlement of Clonmacnoise, where a large number of species have been established and are also showing good performance. In summary the species that are performing well include the common alder, oak, larches, Norway and Sitka spruce and Corsican pine. The other pines have suffered damage from the pine shoot moth which has led to leader break and forking. Some damage has been caused by late spring frost in the spruce, but this is mainly confined to the side branches. Sycamore and ash have not performed well while Western red cedar has low survival levels and in some instances is rather sickly. A similar situation applies to yew. Poorest performance has alos been recorded in beech.

Florence Renou has provided the following summary of the discussion points:

* The vision of a mixed uses and landscapes on the cutaway bogs is inherent to our work within BOGFOR. Where forestry will be recommended, it will be within an integrated landscape. The future of cutaway peatlands would be a mosaic of wetland, grassland, naturally colonised areas and forestry.
* The difficulties of afforesting a brown peat field, straight out of peat production were highlighted. The medium needs to be ameliorated in order to create a layer of aerated peat. Drainage is a pre-requisite but the need to aerate the peat is also crucial to establish successfully a crop of trees. This can be achieved artificially using site preparation techniques or naturally, using native species such as birch or alder, planted, seeded or naturally colonised.
* The management of naturally regenerated areas with birch and its potential uses for later commercial plantations was discussed.
* The need for shelter to promote the early growth of trees on cutaway peatlands was pointed out. Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) is a fast-growing species on this site type creating an ideal shelter system while improving the growing medium and reducing the risk of late spring frosts. Naturally colonising birch woodland can also be used this way. Equipment to carry out cleaning within such woodland has been recently examined.
* Many species have been found to survive and establish well on certain types of cutaway peatland, using adequate silvicultural practices. Most species, bar a few will grow if shelter, peat aeration and nutrition are adequate.
* Corsican pine (*Pinus nigra maritima*) is growing extremely well on all cutaway sites and its form is excellent. It also appears to be less prone to pine shoot moth (*Ryaciona buoliana*) than other pines. Vegetation can be a severe problem in some sites (following fertilisation). Mowing and weed-wiping are two cleaning techniques which have been developed especially for these sites and which have given excellent results.
* For further information on the BOGFOR project contact Florence Renou, email: florence.renou@ucd.ie

The group went on to visit the CARBiFOR field trial at Coillte’s Dooary Property in Portlaoise Forest, led by Dr Kevin Black, Botany Department, and Brian Tobin, Faculty of Agriculture, UCD, who explained the complexities of recording carbon sequestration in Irish forests. The primary objective of the CARBiFOR project is to provide an estimate, based on field studies such as this, of carbon stored in and sequestration potential of current and new forests in Ireland.

In accordance with the good practice guidelines for reporting land-use, land-use change and forestry activities to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) there are five major carbon stock and stock changes that should be reported. These include:

* above-ground living biomass (stems and foliage);
* below-ground living biomass (coarse roots);
* dead wood (includes non-living biomass/wood);
* litter (fallen dead leaves);
* soil (organic and mineral carbon).

At this site a chronosequence of Sitka spruce sites in wet mineral soil is being used to study carbon stocks and fluxes using a variety of scientific methodologies.

For further information on the CARBiFOR Project contact; kevin.black@ucd.ie

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# Botanical Society of Scotland: Atlantic Oakwoods Symposium

A Symposium on Atlantic Oakwoods will be held in the Corran Halls, Oban, Scotland on 14 and 16 September 2005. The event will consist of two days of talks and discussion followed by a field excursion to Glen Nant and Bonawe Woodlands.

The objectives of the meeting are:

* to bring together research scientists, land managers, conservationists and all who share an interest in these woods;
* to provide a forum in which to present current knowledge on the ecological diversity and past management of the woods; and
* to identify needs for conservation and further research. The proceedings of the symposium will be published in a Symposium Special Issue of the Botanical Journal of Scotland.

The programme comprises a number of sessions: Definition and Distribution; Genetic History; Cultural History; Present Structure and Composition; Faunal Relationships; Conservation and Management Policy. There will also be a poster session.

The Symposium is being organised by the Botanical Society of Scotland and sponsored by the Forestry Commission, Forest Research, the Scottish Forestry Trust and the British Ecological Society. Booking forms and further information can be obtained from Sheila Wilson, Institute of Geography, University of Edinburgh, Drummond Street, Edinburgh EH8 9XP, or from the website http://www.geos.ed.ac.uk/abs/bss/

A limited number of bursaries are available for students.

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# The British and Irish Hardwood Improvement Programme

## (BIHIP) Annual General Meeting to be held in Ireland

Plans are well advanced for the 2005 Annual General Meeting of BIHIP to be held in Ireland on 27 and 28 September 2005. While Management Committee Meetings have been held in Ireland in the past, this is the first time that the AGM will be held here. In conjunction with the meeting several of the BIHIP species groups will also convene. . In addition to the meeting, there are field visits planned which will focus on various aspects of the broadleaf improvement programmes.

For further information contact COFORD at 01- 2130609 or email john.fennessy@coford.ie

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# Meeting of Working Party on Common Alder (Alnus glutinosa)

The fourth meeting of the Working Group on Alder was recently held in Tullamore. The meeting opened with a review of progress and an update on what has been achieved to date. Over the past year, COFORD has undertaken an extensive national survey of common alder. at over 30 sites. New stands have recently been added and these too will be evaluated. Most of the stands seen to date fall into two distinct categories:

* good quality older stands – these show the potential of the species on ideal sites with good growing conditions. They stands are considered unsuitable for commercial seed collection, as they seed production is low, but they be part of a future small-scale tree improvement programme in alder, which a sub-group is a examining at present.
* younger stands planted in the past five-fifteen years – the best of these stands present a goodopportunity for seed collection. A number of these will be registered in 2005 under the Forest Reproductive Material Regulation of the EU to form seed collection areas and seed stands.

Health of the stands on the vast majority of the sites was excellent. However, die-back was observed on four sites, and while Phythophthora was not positively identified, the stands need to be further investigated.

Pat Doody, Seed Manager, Coillte provided an update on current demand for seed and plants. Table 2 shows that demand for alder has grown rapidly in recent years.

 **Table 2**: Demand from Coillte Nurseries for common alder planting stock, 1998 – 2004

 **Year Coillte Private Total**

 1998 470,000 400,000 870,000

 1999 822,000 700,000 1,522,000

 2000 1,034,000 900,000 1,934,000

 2001 1,716,000 1,500,000 3,216,000

 2002 1736,700 1,600,000 3,336,000

 2003 1,600,000 1,700,000 3,300,000

 2004 2,400,000 2,600,000 5,000,000

 The meeting was concluded with a visit to some of the best young stands in the Edenderry area, led by Liam Kelly, Teagasc Forestry Advisor, Mullingar.

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# Hardwood Matters

The second issue of “***Hardwood Matters***” will be distributed in the next few weeks. If you are interested in receiving a copy please contact us at 01-2130725. Should you have any material for inclusion in the next issue please forward it to COFORD on a standard form, which can be downloaded from [www.coford.ie/hardwoodmatters](http://www.coford.ie/hardwoodmatters). Further information can be obtained from the COFORD office by calling 01-2130725.

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# Climate Change Position Announcements

The Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) is seeking candidates for positions based in West Africa or Indonesia for its new Climate Adaptation Project, which covers three continents and seven countries. The project summary is:

* Evaluation of impacts of climate change and climatic variability on tropical forest ecosystems;
* Development of monitoring protocols to assess the impacts of climate change on tropical forest ecosystems;
* Development of tools for adaptation measures;
* Development of criteria and indicators for adaptive forest management
* Science-policy dialogue in and across three regions.

The position titles are:

* Climate Change Project Coordinator, West Africa Region (French required);
* Climate Change Scientist, West Africa (Ph.D. and French required);
* Climate Change Project Coordinator, Asia Region;
* Climate Change Senior Scientist, Asia Region (requires PhD and minimum of 10 years experience).

All positions require advance degrees, either in biophysical or social science, and appropriate experience. An attractive USD salary is offered, including expatriation benefits if expatriated. Interviews will be scheduled in August and September either in Indonesia or West Africa. Positions are scheduled to begin by January 2006.
For these job announcements and other senior positions currently available at CIFOR, please visit <http://www.globalrecruitment.net>. Applications should include a cover letter, a detailed CV, and the names and contact information of three professional references. This information should be emailed to hbrykarz@globalrecruitment.net.

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# Vacancies: Co Clare Wood Energy Farm Forestry Project

Under the Forestry Development Fund of the Forest Service, it is proposed to undertake a pilot project to develop the market for wood energy in Co Clare.

In December 2004, Rural Resource Development published ‘A Study of the County Clare Farm Forestry Market’. The project was undertaken as a collaborative effort between the state, local development, private and farming sectors in Co Clare, including the Forest Service, Teagasc, Coillte, forest contractors, forestry companies, key farmer growers and farm organisation representatives in the county.

The need for the study had been escalating in recent years as farm forest growers voiced their concern about the lack of markets for their first thinning produce. In addition to this, the state sector also echoed concerns about the prospects of farmers not thinning their forest crop. The impact of a “non thin” scenario will affect the quantity, quality and value of the mature forest resource. Under the study, a need for a farm forestry market within Co Clare was identified as a particularly important issue for the future viability and growth of the farm forestry sector.

The study produced a total of fourteen recommendations relating to the seven key issues identified as affecting the potential commercial exploitation of the private forestry resource in Co Clare, including the major challenge of developing new markets for the first thinning resource, for which the specific actions were recommended.

In addition the study forecasted that forest owner co-operative marketing, facilitated by professional foresters, would evolve in an entrepreneurial manner to supply new and existing markets. The “grouping of forest properties for co-operative marketing will increase the number of sites that become attractive for thinning by reducing the threshold area of such sites”.

 The overall objective of the pilot project is to assist farm forest growers in Co Clare to achieve an economically viable return from their forestry produce through the development of the wood energy market. The project involves the development of the market for wood energy in Co Clare. In order to implement the project, the following two service contracts are being offered:

**Forestry Supply Co-ordinator**

The primary duty will be the delivery of the overall project as outlined above. This will include the following duties;

* identification of forest owners in Co Clare with a first thinning resource who could potentially supply new and existing markets on an economically viable basis, including an assessment of their first thinning resource and its relative location
* identification of commercial opportunities in wood biomass and other markets, including quantity and quality requirements
* examination of supply logistics and potential for co-operative/group action, or other appropriate actions
* identification and establishment of appropriate marketing, distribution and storage mechanisms, including locating foresters, or others, to act as potential agents for the supply chain
* achieving targets as set by the project Steering Group
* co-operation with and actively supporting the work of the Wood Energy Project Co-ordinator
* undertaking any other relevant work required for the successful completion of the overall project.

**Wood Energy Project Co-ordinator**

The primary duty will be the delivery of the overall project as outlined above. This will include the following duties:

* identification of potential candidates for a wood energy project in Co Clare
* drawing up detailed proposals for the delivery of one or more wood energy pilot project(s)
* assessment of the economic and technical viability of the identified project(s)
* undertaking promotional actions and securing of targeted support for the proposed project(s)
* facilitation of the establishment of one or more pilot wood energy projects in Co Clare
* achieving targets as set by the project Steering Group
* co-operation with and actively supporting the work of the Forestry Supply Co-ordinator
* undertaking any other relevant work required for the successful completion of the overall project.

Applications for either of the above contracts of service, including CVs, should be submitted to Rural Resource Development by Wednesday 24 August 2005. All correspondence should be marked, Co Clare Wood Energy Farm Forestry Project and should be submitted by post or email to Doirin Graham, Rural Resource Development, Shannon Business Centre, Town Centre, Shannon, Co Clare. Tel: 061361144; Fax: 061 361954; email: info@rrd.ie

Queries up to 12 August should be referred to Mary Ryan of Teagasc at 087 2242281. With queries after 12 August, please contact Nuala Ni Fhlatharta of Teagasc on 087 2242282.

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# Practical wood energy initiative in Co Wexford

Mr John Browne TD, Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture and Food with special responsibility for Forestry, on 14 July announced at the Killag Show in Bannow, Co Wexford, his intention to convert the Wexford headquarters of his Department in Johnstown Castle to a wood fired heating system before the end of the year.
It is proposed to use a technologically innovative process where wood chips derived from locally sourced renewable and sustainably grown forest thinnings would substitute for non-renewable fossil fuel energy.

Minister of State Browne said that in making his decision he was conscious of the importance of reducing our dependence on expensive, imported fossil fuels - which are an increasingly diminishing resource. The Minister also commented on the importance of protecting the environment and pointed out that as a 'carbon-neutral' fuel, wood energy can contribute significantly to Ireland meeting its targets under the Kyoto Protocol.

“Actions speak louder than words”, Minister Browne said today. “The promotion of wood as a viable alternative energy source is a key objective of the Government's National Greenhouse Gas Abatement Strategy and this project should act as a template example to suitable institutions and industries of what can be achieved. We must exploit our most favourable climatic conditions that give us a comparative advantage in the growth of biomass - whether from purpose grown energy crops or from forestry and agriculture residues”.

Recent research has conclusively shown that wood, sustainably produced, is a renewable carbon fuel that can replace much of our current use of fossil fuels, especially to provide heat for homes, commerce and industry. Well-designed modern wood burning heating systems provide cost effective and environmentally friendly warmth from locally planted forests.

The project will be carried out by the Office of Public Works in association with the Forest Service and COFORD. The boiler rating will be in the order of 500 kW, firing on wood chips derived from sustainably managed forests, and the Department will be seeking tenders for the fuel supply shortly.

“It is my hope that, when the effectiveness of the system is demonstrated, our example will be followed in respect of other public buildings”, the Minister said.

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# Call for proposals

## Research Stimulus Fund: Sustainable Agricultural Production Research

The Department of Agriculture and Food invites applications for funding under the Research Stimulus Fund. Research Institutions with an established research capability are invited to submit proposals for projects supporting sustainable agricultural production in the following areas:

* Agri-Environment
	+ Animal Manure - efficient utilisation of nutrients from pig, cattle and poultry manures
	+ Water - sustainability of agricultural production practices to ensure water quality
	+ Gas emissions - identification of measures to control emissions of greenhouse gases and ammonia from agricultural production
* Non-Food Crops
	+ Bio-Fuel and other non-food crops, including technologies, bioremediation, economics and environmental impact
* Agri-Food Economics
	+ Farming competitiveness/productivity and farm household viability

The research funded will be of a "public good" nature. The results will be made freely available and will support sustainable agricultural production practices. Preference will be given to projects involving inter-institutional collaboration and/or the development of critical mass. Links to industry partners are also welcome where appropriate.

Application forms and guidelines are available from the State Bodies Division of the Department of Agriculture and Food, Agriculture House, 3W, Kildare Street, Dublin 2. Contact: Mary Cullinan, email: mary.cullinan@agriculture.gov.ie; tel: 01-6072037. The closing date for receipt of applications is Friday, 16 September 2005.

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# Forest Link - Linking Policies to Communities

Donegal County Council is hosting a two-day international workshop in Donegal on 17 and 18 October 2005 in the Mill Park Hotel, Donegal Town. The conference, ***Forest Link – Linking Policies to Communities***, is the culmination of an EU-funded project.

It is hoped the workshop will encourage a better integration of forest and rural development policies as they directly affect and are affected by local, national and international policies.

Local key players came together in 2000 to develop an integrated, long-term forest strategy under the auspices of the County Development Board. This strategy clearly identified the need for a coordinated approach at a regional, national and international level to better manage our forest resources to maximise the economic, environmental and social benefits to local rural and urban communities.

This integrated Donegal forest strategy is being implemented through the Forest Link project. It focuses on adding value to timber resources of private forest owners and the development of community forests in Co Donegal. This is achieved through the creation and enhancement of linkages and the examination of models of best practice.

The workshop will provide ideas and tools to develop sustainable and integrated forest policies while promoting and encouraging community involvement. It will examine local, national and international models of best practice.

The role of forestry is changing in Irish society. The contribution of forestry to the development of local communities cannot be underestimated. It is time for a highly collaborative approach, based on partnerships that recognise the important linkages between landowners, government, rural communities, natural resource professionals and other stakeholders.

The workshop is targeted at central, regional and local government; members of the county development board; natural resource companies; rural development companies; training and research institutes; community groups; landowners.

For more information, contact Mary McCrossan, Forest Link Administrator on 074 9561300 mary.mccrossan@donegalcoco.ie

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# European forest research raises its profile

A new high-level organisation serving European forest research will be established on 4 September when European Forest Institute changes its legal status from that of Finnish association to one of international organisation established by European countries.

At the beginning of July Spain and Romania ratified the Convention on European Forest Institute. Six other countries (Norway, Denmark, Croatia, Finland, Sweden and Germany) ratified the Convention earlier. Two months after the deposit of the eighth instrument of the ratification, the Convention enters into force.

The current structure of EFI association will remain very much the same with an addition of a new organisational body, the Council. Representatives of ratifying countries will convene at Council every three years. The first Council meeting will be held in Helsinki, Finland on 5 September.

The new international status of EFI, endorsed by the European governments, will start a new era in pan-European research co-operation by bringing international forest research closer to the national agendas. With the new status it will be easier to pool resources for the topics important in forests and forestry.

"After a dense year that was marked by the active role of EFI in the NFRI [National Forest Research Institute] initiative as well as in the Forest-Based Technology Platform, and by the participation of EFI at two successful IP [integrated project] proposals under the 6th framework programme, the eight ratification came just at the right time. The next Annual EFI Conference that will be held in Barcelona in September will indeed have the opportunity both to review the activities of EFI as it is, and to launch the new EFI on its future tracks", states Francois Houllier, Chairman of EFI Board.

EFI was established by 12 European organisations in 1993. Now the Institute has nearly 140 member organisations from 39 countries. The members of EFI are universities, research institutes, industry and non-governmental organisations. EFI conducts research in four Research Programmes (Forest Ecology and Management, Forest Products Markets and Socio-Economics, Policy Analysis and Forest Resources and Information). Its annual budget is 3 million euro and its international staff represented 15 nationalities last year.

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1. Scenarios 2-4 assume 100% grant aid. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)