Forestry and Wood Update

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# New contact details for COFORD

On 20 August, COFORD moved to new offices. Our new contact details are:

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Our email addresses and mobile phone numbers remain the same.

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# Research Conference

## Forest Research and Development in Ireland 2004 – Underpinning Industry Development

## 20 and 21 September at the Tullamore Court Hotel, Tullamore, Co Offaly

COFORD is responsible for executing the Forestry RTDI programme of the National Development Plan, 2000-2006. We are now in year five of this seven year programme and have funded over 35 projects and numerous short-term research missions. Key to the COFORD programme is the effective and timely dissemination of research and development findings to ensure that forest policy and practice in Ireland is led by the most up-to-date scientific knowledge.

This two-day research conference is part of this dissemination programme. COFORD is currently finalising an R&D gap analysis, which aims to chart R&D priorities in forestry and wood products up to 2010. This conference will be an opportunity for attendees to feed into this process through open dialogue and group discussion.

Researchers in past COFORD programmes currently hold key influential positions in many State and private organisations. The current programme involves over 143 researchers and employees in forestry and wood processing companies. Many participants in the programme are completing Masters and Doctoral degrees and will be a knowledge resource for the sector over the coming decades.

We invite you to attend this conference to gain a better understanding of our current programme and to help shape our future activities.

For the full programme and booking form please click [**here**](http://www.coford.ie/newsandevents/Conference-RnD.pdf).

Please contact COFORD as soon as possible to reserve your place at this conference - phone 01-2310725 or email: info@coford.ie

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# Wood Energy 2004

COFORD and the Sustainable Energy Ireland Renewable Energy Information Office will again be co-hosting the annual Wood Energy Conference. This year the conference will be held at the Rochestown Park Hotel, Cork, on 7 and 8 October. For the full information brochure and booking form, [download the pdf here.](http://www.coford.ie/newsandevents/WoodEnergy2004.pdf)

This conference outlines the wood pellet production and wood-based combined heat and power technology options. In addition to the available forestry and industrial wood by-products, presentations on short rotation crops and agricultural residues confirm Ireland’s excellent conditions for developing indigenous energy production.

The conference will facilitate a greater understanding of the current Irish heating markets and the potential for wood-based automatic heating systems for both space and process heating.

Leading experts from Austria, the Netherlands, Scandinavia and Ireland will share their expertise in the development of wood energy and the opportunities for internal trade. There will also be presentations from Irish companies who have invested in wood energy. The ‘Biomass Marketplace’ gives the floor to Irish companies who are now offering wood energy products and services.

Preceding the conference, on Wednesday 6 October, there will be a demonstration of biomass harvesting equipment in operation at a nearby forest location. A Timberjack Residue Bundler will be demonstrated and Ed Power of Timberjack will make a short presentation about this machine. There is no charge for attending the demonstration on 6 October only, but registration is essential - please email renewables@reio.ie if you wish to attend.

A new website www.woodenergy.ie to be hosted by COFORD will be launched during the conference by Mr David Nevins, Chairman COFORD.

Attendance at the conference is subject to a registration fee of €295.00 per person. A one-day delegate rate of €195.00 for 7 or 8 October is available on request.

Register via SEI Renewable Energy Information Office, Shinagh House, Bandon, Co Cork. Tel: +353-23-42193; Fax: +353-23-29154; Email: renewables@reio.ie; or book online at <http://www.sei.ie/reio/reioconfshop.html>

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# Carbon Corner

## What happens to carbon when wood is harvested?

Once wood is harvested from the forest it enters any one of a number of product streams with varying uses and associated decay rates. These range from days (in the case of biofuel), to years and centuries. At present the assumption in the IPCC Good Practice Guidance is that the carbon is immediately oxidised and returns to the atmosphere on harvest – the so-called default approach.

A number of countries and organisations are advocating that wood products should be treated in a different manner; in a way that follows their life cycle, tracking their decay through time. A number of approaches have been suggested to deal with this principle. They differ mainly in where and when changes in carbon stocks/emissions from wood use are measured.

The stock change approach estimates net changes in the carbon stocks in the forest and wood products pools. Changes in carbon stocks in the forests are accounted for in the country where the wood is grown, the producing country. Carbon stock changes in the products pool are measured in the consuming country. In other words, changes are measured when and where they occur.

The production approach on the other hand estimates changes in the forests and wood products pool, but attributes both to the producing country. Changes are measured when but not where they occur.

The other main approach is referred to as the atmospheric flow approach. Here net emissions or removals of carbon to or from the atmosphere are accounted for when and where they occur. In contrast to the stock change approach, the consuming country cannot increase its pool of wood products but instead accounts for emissions from the decay of wood products as they occur.

One desirable feature to incorporate in any approach would be to ensure that wood energy is not disadvantaged *viz a viz* fossil fuel. Under the current IPCC Guidelines emissions from wood combustion are recorded but are not used in the calculation of overall emissions. This is because, using the current default approach, all harvested wood is assumed to be returned to the atmosphere at harvest. To account for emissions from wood biofuel would introduce double counting.

The atmospheric flow approach accounts for emissions from wood biofuels in the same way as fossil fuels and would therefore not be satisfactory as an approach favouring renewable green energy from wood. A full discussion of the different approaches is given in FCCC/TP/2003/7, available at [www.unfccc.int](http://www.unfccc.int). Views of Parties on the different approaches are also available at the UNFCC site as document FCCC/SBSTA/2004/MISC.9.

While some may regard inclusion of harvested wood under the carbon accounting framework as a potential way of incentivising the use of wood there are many technical issues to be resolved before this becomes a reality. These issues will be discussed at an upcoming UNFCCC Workshop on Harvested Wood Products to be held at Lillehammer in Norway in the first week of September.

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# New Hardwood Sales Catalogue

Over the past two years COFORD has managed a process aimed at increasing the knowledge base of the production of quality hardwood timber. This has involved hosting many seminars and workshops aimed at both the establishment and management of broadleaved stands. In addition COFORD has held events to increase the growers’ knowledge of what hardwood merchants require in terms of quality, presentation, species and volumes. The next step of this process is to put in place a free catalogue for advertising hardwood stands and/or logs.

The first catalogue will be published and circulated by COFORD on October 15th. The closing date for receipt of information for inclusion in the free listing section is 30 September. The catalogue will feature both ‘for sale’ and ‘wanted’ sections and aims to bring producers and buyers together in a more coherent manner. Anecdotal evidence points to frustration among growers at not being able to find buyers for their hardwoods and among buyers at not being able to source enough home-grown hardwoods! This COFORD catalogue, which will be called ‘*Hardwood Matters*’, will be issued to a wide audience including timber merchants, hardwood sawmills, timber growers and forestry professional.

The catalogue will be produced on a periodic basis and while the objective of this exercise is to create a more active market for hardwood timber, COFORD will not be involved in the sales transaction - it will merely bring growers and hardwood users together.

A standard form must be completed by all those wishing to advertise their hardwoods. This form can be downloaded at [www.coford.ie/hardwoodmatters/default.html](http://www.coford.ie/hardwoodmatters/default.html) or can be obtained from the COFORD office by calling 01-2130725.

We encourage all growers and buyers to use this catalogue to build up a greater forum for discussing hardwood matters! Any comments on this initiative should be addressed to Mr John Fennessy at the COFORD office, tel: 01-2130725 or email john.fennessy@coford.ie.

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# Forest Tree Seed Workshop

Almost forty people attended the forest tree seed workshop organised by COFORD at the Mount Wolseley Hotel in Tullow, Co Carlow recently. Invited speakers presented papers on the many different aspects of tree seed management, processing, handling and storage. In his opening address, David Nevins, Chairman COFORD, spoke of the ‘major changes in the structure and scale of Irish forestry from the mid 1980s, with 5,000 ha of total afforestation, mainly conifers, to today’s programme with a three fold increase to over 15,000 ha and much of it broadleaves particularly native broadleaves’. To service this level of afforestation requires the supply of a substantial quantity of forest tree seed and approximately 40,000 kg are currently required with a monetary value of about one million euro. Forest seed is only a miniscule element in the overall cost of a forestry programme, yet it is the key to the success of the entire programme.

Gerard Cahalane Head Plant Health and FRM, Forest Service, presented a paper on *Seed regulation –national, European and international rules governing forest tree seed* and described the various regulations which the Irish State is party to, including EU and OECD. Pat Doody Seed Manager, Coillte, described the various facets of practical tree seed management, including general seed sources, seed origin, identification and assessment of seed crop and seed collection procedures. Derek Felton of Woodstock Seeds Ltd has many years experience in seed collection and he spoke about collecting seed from native species, concluding with the results of his assessment of the native oak provenance trials and some of the more interesting findings. Dr Conor O’Reilly presented the most up to date results on the COFORD-funded project, QualiBroad, a study aimed at the improved seed germination and plant growth using a number of different approaches in five native broadleaf species. John O’Reilly, CEO of Green Belt Ltd, presented a paper on *Seed supply and plant quality – the growers view*. Green Belt Ltd currently has one third of the market share and has planted approximately twenty million trees in the last two seasons. This equates to 17,000 acres of new forest. For a company like Green Belt Ltd., getting it right from the start is very important. John highlighted a number of important issues for growers.

During the afternoon participants visited the Coillte Seed Centre in Ballintemple where Pat Doody, Monica Murphy and Patsy Kelly demonstrated the entire process from cones arriving at the facility to the cold storage of the cleaned seed ready for dispatch to the nursery for sowing. Participants were shown the seed kiln, the seed de-winger, seed cleaning and grading methods, seed storage, seed sampling and testing.

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# Genetic differentiation of yew populations using nuclear and cpDNA markers

COFORD has agreed to support the collection of a number of Irish populations of yew for a European study presently being co-ordinated by Prof. Ladislav Paule of the University of Zvolen in Slovakia. Prof. Paule with his colleague, Dr Dusan Gomory, have commenced a pilot investigation of genetic differentiation of *Taxus baccata* populations throughout Europe using nuclear and cpDNA markers. They are particularly interested in remote populations at the extreme end of the distribution of the species and Ireland is the most westerly location. The results of this study should be of great interest to foresters and ecologists and it will cast some light on the origin of our native yew and its relationship with other yews populations in Europe.

For further information please contact COFORD at 01-2130725 or email john.fennessy@coford.ie

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# In Search of Birch

The Irish Birch Improvement Programme research team is calling for assistance in locating silver birch individual trees or stands of superior timber form for inclusion in the improvement programme. If you have information on the location of birch with superior form please contact Dr Ellen O’ Connor, Irish Birch Improvement Programme, Teagasc, Kinsealy Research Centre, Malahide Road, Dublin 17; email: eoconnor@kinsealy.teagasc.ie or telephone 01 8460644.

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# Alder Survey

A working group has been set up to examine a number of issues around the large areas of common alder currently being planted in the country. This working group was established under the auspices of COFORD, in co-operation with the Forest Service. The group is currently carrying out a survey of alder stands throughout the country.

If you known of any stands of alder (young or old) and wish to participate in this survey please [download the survey form here](http://www.coford.ie/AlderSurvey.pdf), complete and return it to COFORD, Agriculture Building, Belfield, Dublin 4 or email john.fennessy@coford.ie

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# Employment opportunity at the Centre for Timber Engineering

The Centre for Timber Engineering, Napier University, Edinburgh, is advertising the post of Director.

The Centre is an industry leader in research, education and CPD and provides expert services to the timber industry. They require an exceptional individual with extensive experience of the timber industry at an international level and preferably with a combined industrial and research background. A highly motivated strategic and analytical thinker and a persuasive communicator, the successful applicant will lead a current team of 20 researchers and educators, and will manage and develop the Centre as a national and international centre of excellence.

Informal enquiries are welcomed by Professor Robin Mackenzie on +44 (0)131 455 2645 (email r.mackenzie@napier.ac.uk).

For an application pack contact Cheryl Thomson on +44 (0)131-455 2602, email c.thomson@napier.ac.uk to whom applications should be returned.

Applications and enquiries will be treated in strict confidence. The closing date for applications is 20 September 2004.

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# BIHIP Field Day and AGM

The AGM and Field Day of BIHIP, the British and Irish Hardwood Improvement Programme, is scheduled to take place at the Atholl Palace Hotel in Pitlochry, Scotland on 21 and 22 October 2004. The programme is to be hosted by the BIHIP Birch Group and Forest Research. The programme is designed to:

* Update participants about the latest progress in tree improvement in the birch, ash and oak programmes;
* Showcase the birch improvement programme in Tayside, Scotland;
* Provide an opportunity to explore the potential and problems for growing quality broadleaves in Scotland;
* Provide participants with the opportunity to learn more about the general principles and issues underlying tree improvement and provenance choice.

The field day will be of interest to all growers, merchants and processors of broadleaves and will include the following stops:

* Killiecrankie and Bonskeid Estate – Birch improvement programme, plus tree selection, registration and management of seed stands, marketing and utilisation of birch.
* Bolfracks Estate and Craigvinian Forest – Performance of ‘elite’ birch plus trees, cherry and sycamore, the BIHIP ash and oak improvement programmes, provenance variation and adaptation.

For further information please contact Gabriel Hemery, Secretary BIHIP, Northmoor Trust, Little Wittenham, OXON OX14 4RA Great Britain. Tel.: 0044 1865 407792 or visit the BIHIP Web site [www.bihip.com](http://www.bihip.com).

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# New wood pellet production facility in Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland is to be the site of the UK's largest production facility for a new environmentally friendly wood pellets. It is being built by timber processing firm Balcas at its plant outside Enniskillen, County Fermanagh. It will make high energy wood pellets from surplus sawdust and woodchips. The £9m plant will produce 50,000 tonnes of fuel pellets a year, enough to meet the company's own energy requirements and power 10,000 homes. The pellets can be burned in industrial and domestic heating boilers without creating carbon dioxide, which causes global warming. The on-site processing of sawdust and wood chips would eliminate 10,000 heavy truck journeys each year from the roads of Northern Ireland - equivalent to 1.5 million truck miles.

According to Balcas managing director, Ernest Kidney, the opportunity had come about because company productivity had increased by about 40%, leading to a huge surplus of sawdust and woodchips. ‘Inside the next decade, bio fuel pellets could deliver the energy for a quarter of new rural homes in Northern Ireland,’ he said.

‘Bio fuel pellets can provide the energy needs of communities where the hinterland precludes wind generation, where the topography is hostile to overhead and underground cabling and where the fuel itself grows from the hillside to the roadside. Throughout Europe, timber based bio fuel pellets already provide heat, power, and price stability. Timber is a cheap and renewable resource and the bio fuel pellets industry provides a bonus of well-paid rural jobs in harvesting, production and distribution.’

The project is being supported by £2m from the Department of Trade and Industry in London and a £1m interest free loan from the NIE SMART programme. Balcas is one of the UK's most advanced wood processing companies, with seven manufacturing and processing sites in Ireland, Britain and Europe. The company employs 1,000 people in harvesting and processing the output from the renewable forests of Northern Europe. Trade and Industry Energy Minister, Stephen Timms, said: ‘Finding new sources of energy and integrating them into our lives are some of the most important challenges we face in coming decades. Balcas is making a significant contribution to meeting these challenges by developing the UK's largest bio fuel pellet plant here in Fermanagh.’

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