Forestry and Wood Update

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# COFORD Connects Notes

The latest set of COFORD Connects notes is now available and has been distributed to subscribers. The new titles are:

**Reproductive Material**

9. The importance of provenance and site selection on the production of quality noble fir (*Abies procera*) Christmas trees.

**Silviculture and Forest Management**

12. Systematic spacing trials for plantation research and demonstration.

13. Establishing a sustainable forest resource on industrial cutaway peatlands: tree performance and silvicultural techniques.

COFORD Connects is a series of practical information notes, covering a wide range of topics of relevance to the forestry sector. The notes are available free of charge, in a purpose made ring binder, from the COFORD office. If you would like to receive a folder with the complete set of notes, please email info@coford.ie.

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# Hardwood Matters

In January 2005 COFORD published the first issue of ***Hardwood Matters*** – a catalogue for advertising hardwood timber. The catalogue features “for sale” and “wanted” sections and is published twice a year and widely distributed to the forestry and wood processing sectors.

The third issue of ***Hardwood Matters*** will be compiled at the end of January 2006. To submit an entry – free- of-charge – please email details to [john.fennessy@coford.ie](mailto:john.fennessy@coford.ie) before 6 January. See the [COFORD website - www.coford.ie/hardwoodmatters/](http://www.coford.ie/hardwoodmatters/) for more information, to download previous issues and a form to be used when submitting information for the next issue.

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# CARBON CORNER

## On your bike

At long last a biomass boiler grant scheme has seen the light of day. Administered by Sustainable Energy Ireland it goes under the title *Pilot Bioheat Boiler Deployment Programme*, and can be accessed at <http://www.sei.ie/> following the links to funded programmes. While it is only a pilot programme it opens the door, and other schemes may follow. To quote the scheme documentation:

*The programme will support qualifying boiler systems typically rated between 60 kW and 1,000 kW that are fuelled by wood pellets and/or wood chip fuel.  It is proposed to offer support of 25% of the capital costs involved in biomass boiler and fuel storage purchase and installation. To stimulate interest and to help ensure good quality projects it is also proposed to support feasibility studies by suitably qualified contractors at 45% of the external costs, up to a maximum of €5000 in each case. This support will be made available for a limited period only, and not after 2006.*

Forestry companies with large client bases and groups of farmers can now get capital support for setting up biomass-based heat supply arrangements for hotels and other large buildings. Likewise those in the wood pellet area also can avail of the support. The message is clear: on your bike.

Increased penetration of biomass into the heat and energy markets depends on cost-effective harvesting and chipping systems and good fuel quality. There is a wide range of possible systems for harvesting and chipping: options are clearly set out on the COFORD woodenergy.ie portal by clicking on Biomass Harvesting Equipment, where the latest information is available free-of-charge. A wide range of wood fuel specifications has been drafted by the CEN – the European standards body – the full list can be seen by following the links to solid biofuels at http://www.cenorm.be.

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# COFORD-funded project is front page news

The COFORD-funded project – Foresight study of rural Ireland in 2025 – recently made headline news. The report “*Rural Ireland 2025*” was launched by the Minister for Agriculture and Food, Mary Coughlan TD, in Dublin on 16 November – with the Irish Times running the front page headline “Just 10,000 farmers to be left by 2025”. While the Minister disagreed with this figure, she did welcome its publication as a useful contribution to the debate about policy development for rural Ireland.

The report asks what will the rural economy look like by 2025? It recognises that the pace of structural change in rural Ireland is accelerating. The agricultural and food processing industries are undergoing substantial rationalisation. Although not stated in these terms in the report, relative to their current dominant position in the national and rural economies, agriculture and foreign direct investment could become insignificant in the economy of 2025. The progressive loss of multinational companies, combined with a waning of the building and construction boom accompanied with a downturn in agriculture, would have very adverse effects nationally and would be severely felt in rural areas where:

* A sizeable part of the population is employed by multinationals;
* Over one quarter of the population is employed in agriculture and the building industry, where long-term contraction is expected;
* Overall there is a high dependence on agriculture in rural areas, but it is heavily subsidised at levels that cannot be expected to continue through to 2025;
* Increases in fossil fuel prices and constraints on greenhouse gas emissions will constrain traditional industry.

Unlike in recent decades, most future growth must come from productivity gains. To secure continued competitiveness and sustainability of the rural economy, accessible jobs will be of crucial importance. To achieve these strategic goals, Ireland must position itself in the knowledge economy. The report concludes that the re-positioning of rural Ireland in the knowledge economy and ensuring its future competitiveness are fundamentally dependent on the implementation of three overarching measures outlined below. These are the establishment of:

* A Rural Policy Implementation Group;
* Integrated Regional Research and Innovation Systems;
* Education and training programmes specifically designed to raise the human resource capacity of rural regions and especially of businesses.

In the report forestry is recognised as a multifunctional industry and land use which, in addition to the production of marketable forest products, has important dimensions in relation to the rural economy and employment, agriculture, renewable energy generation and the provision of environmental goods and services. The future competitiveness of the forestry sector will require greater cost efficiencies throughout all segments of the wood supply chain, as well as significant investment in R&D, including the wood processing sector. In the future the forestry sector will play an increasing role in the provision of public goods and services. With regard to climate change, it states that forestry has a significant role to play in storing atmospheric carbon dioxide in forests and wood products. Recreational use of forests will also grow in line with increasing affluence and increased population levels, as well as greater urbanisation.

The Rural Foresight project, initiated in late 2003, was undertaken by an Inter-Institutional Working Group from NUI Maynooth, University College Dublin and Teagasc. To provide a wider input into the study, a Consultative Form comprising knowledgeable and influential stakeholders was established. Their discussions were facilitated by the presentation of Thematic Papers prepared by members of the joint Working Group and by staff from COFORD and the Marine Institute.

The other funding partners in the project were the Department of Agriculture & Food, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Marine Institute. Copies of the report are available from COFORD at no charge.

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# Dr Gerhardt Gallagher wins RDS award

Organised by the RDS and sponsored by the Forest Service, Department of Agriculture and Food, the Irish Forestry Awards seek to reward and recognise Irish farmers and organisations which are facing the current forestry industry challenges and employing the principles of sustainable forest management.

The *Forester of the Year Award* is made to a person who has made a significant contribution to the development of the forestry sector in Ireland, either through their work, policy formulation or entrepreneurial activity. This year, this prestigious award was presented to Dr Gerhardt Gallagher in recognition of his many contributions to the forestry sector over the years, including his involvement with COFORD in the development and use of the national forest carbon sequestration model. The award was presented by Mr Brendan Smith TD, Minister of State in the Department of Agriculture and Food, at Farmleigh House, Phoenix Park, on 24 November 2005.

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# Workshop on Climate Change and Forest Genetic Diversity

## and Implications for Sustainable Forest Management in Europe

The workshop is one of the pan-European actions for implementation of Vienna Resolution 5 (Climate change and sustainable forest management in Europe) and will take place in Paris on 15 and 16 March 2006. This event is organised jointly by the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI) and the International Union of Forest Research Organisation (IUFRO) and the local host is the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, France.

The workshop objectives are to:

* Present up-to-date reviews based on current understanding on how forest trees will cope with and adapt to climate change;
* Discuss the implications for practicing sustainable forest management in Europe;
* Provide inputs and recommendations to the MCPFE process for future action.

The target audience of this workshop is participants of the MCPFE process and other policy-makers, foresters, forest managers, conservation managers and scientists as well as others working in this and related areas.

For further registration information please contact the EUFORGEN Secretariat at IPGRI ([euf\_secretariat@cgiar.org](mailto:euf_secretariat@cgiar.org)).

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# EUFORGEN Stand Forming Broadleaves Meeting

The Chairman of the former Temperate Oaks and Beech Network, Ladislav Paule, welcomed participants from 28 countries to the first meeting of the newly established Stand-forming Broadleaves Network.

The meeting opened with an introduction by J. Koskela EUFORGEN Co-ordinator to Phase III of the EUFORGEN Programme which runs from 1 January 2005 to 31 December 2009. The objectives of EUFORGEN during the new mandate to 2009 are:

* To promote practical implementation of gene conservation and appropriate use of genetic resources as an integral part of sustainable forest management;
* To facilitate further development of methods to conserve genetic diversity of European forests;
* Collate and disseminate reliable information on forest genetic resources in Europe.

Progress in gene conservation in European countries[[1]](#footnote-1) was discussed:

* Central & Eastern Europe: Many countries have become members of the European Union in the recent past and have had to adopt to new regulations on forest reproductive material.
* Mediterranean region: One of the main characteristic of the Mediterranean region is species richness. It is however also subject to a high number of threats, including overgrazing, over cutting, fires, introduction of exotic species, urbanization and fragmentation.
* Western Europe: Climate change is considered important for the use of genetic resources for future forests in Western Europe. Several countries, including Britain and Ireland reported on the development of native woodland schemes and progress made in the British and Irish Hardwood Improvement Programme (BIHIP).
* Northern Europe: In the majority of the northern European countries birch is a major stand-forming broadleaf species. The meeting was urged to accept birch one of the species to come under the auspices of the Network.

An agreed programme based on the three EUFORGEN objectives was agreed for Phase III (Table I).

Table I. EUFORGEN objectives and Programme activities to end of 2009.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Objectives | Activities |
| Promote practical implementation of gene conservation and appropriate use of genetic resources as an integral part of sustainable forest management.  Group 1 | Promote implementation of recommendations presented in the Technical Guidelines at national level, as needed or requested;  Provide advice to countries on issues related to forest genetic resources, if requested;  Facilitate implementation of common action plans and use of best management practices;  Develop protocols to evaluate genetic consequences of different management practices and identify genetically appropriate management practices in collaboration with forest managers and policy makers. |
| Facilitate further development of methods to conserve genetic diversity of European forests.  Group 2 | Develop common action plans as part of pan-European gene conservation strategies;  Develop common methods for genetic monitoring;  Revise Technical Guidelines and develop new ones, as needed;  Highlight negative consequences of the use of inappropriate forest reproductive material;  Develop methods to promote genetically sustainable regeneration;  Improve collaboration between nature conservation and gene conservation efforts in Europe; |
| Collate and disseminate reliable information on forest genetic resources in Europe.  Group 3 | Increase awareness among policy makers, forestry professionals and the general public on the importance of forest genetic resources;  Compile and make available geo-referenced data on gene conservation units in Europe;  Publish reports on the state of forest genetic resources in Europe and other relevant issues;  Facilitate exchange of information among countries. |

J. Hansen, (Denmark) findings of a study investigating the possible consequences of a changing climate and the effects of more severe drought on the survival and growth of sessile oak

G. von Wuehlisch gave an update on COST Action E52 “Beech Diversity”. European beech is a species of many ecosystems, occurring mainly in west and central Europe while bridging between Scandinavian and Mediterranean latitudes. In a joint project approximately 60 provenance trials were established in 24 European countries, including Ireland in the early 1990s. This COST Action will examine the performance of these trials and compare and contrast the results in the context of future climate change. This action will commence at the beginning of 2006.

J. Koskela updated the Network members on the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI)-IUFRO workshop on forest genetic diversity and climate change, which is one of the actions of the Ministerial Conferences for the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) Work Programme to implement Vienna Resolution 5 (Climate change and sustainable forest management in Europe). The purpose of the workshop is to analyze the role of forest genetic diversity in mitigating the effects of climate change and maintaining sustainable forestry in Europe. IPGRI and IUFRO are currently developing the agenda for the workshop which will be held in Paris on 15 and 16 March 2006 in collaboration with the French Ministry of Agriculture and the French Commission on Genetic Resources.

G. Vendramin (Italy) made a presentation showing how plants are ideal models to investigate gene flow and genetic diversity while F. Spada (Italy) gave an overview of Italian phytogeographical and climate zones. He highlighted the wide genetic diversity found in the country and enumerated the many challenges faced in gene conservation.

Irish participation in EUFORGEN is funded by the Forest Service.

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# Environ2006

The School of Biological and Environmental Science, University College Dublin, will host the 16th Irish Environmental Researchers’ Colloquium from the evening of Friday 27 until lunch time on Sunday 29 January 2006. Oral and poster presentations relating to any aspect of environmental research, policy and management will be accepted. Indicative themes include:

* Ecology, biodiversity and conservation
* Marine and coastal environments
* Aquatic environments
* Terrestrial environments
* Society, policy and economy
* Environmental management
* Agriculture and forestry
* Aquaculture and fisheries
* Atmosphere and climate
* Agricultural and environmental meteorology
* Energy and noise
* Other

The colloquium is an ideal forum for postgraduate students to present and discuss their research findings or ongoing projects. Delegates will also have the opportunity to submit their paper for publication following peer review. Other details will be added in due course. For any additional queries contact [environ2006@ucd.ie](mailto:environ2006@ucd.ie) or visit the website www.ucd.ie/environ2006. The final date for submission of abstracts and early registration is 20 November 2005. Colloquium fees (before and after 20 November) are: Full fee - €90, 110; Student - €45, 60; ESAI full member - €60, 75; ESAI student member - €30, 45.

To join the Environmental Sciences Association of Ireland (ESAI), go to [www.esaiweb.org](http://www.esaiweb.org).

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# Ecobuild 2006

Ecobuild 2006 is an event dedicated to sustainable design and construction and is a result of the increasing interest and development of the “green” building sector, as environmentally driven issues and concerns become more central to design, planning, building methods and materials. The event provides a conference, exhibition, networking opportunities and special features. This forum brings together leading thinkers, providers and suppliers to discuss, plan and address the key issues facing designers and construction professionals. The Ecobuild conference will address key issues in the development and improvement of Britain’s rapidly growing “green” approach to building design and energy efficiency.

Ecobuild is a conference focusing exclusively on the challenges faced by the planning, building and design community to deliver a “greener” future for Britain’s towns and cities. Debate and discussion on the latest issues will be covered.

The 2006 event follows on from the highly acclaimed inaugural Ecobuild in 2005, held at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre. Among the themes to be addressed by leading practitioners at the conference & workshops studies will be:

* Delivering Sustainable Building in the Current Regulatory Environment
* Environmental Impact of Building Materials
* Achieving Commercially Successful ‘Green’ Building
* Regeneration and Environmental Performance
* Planning and Incorporating Infrastructure to Support Sustainable Communities
* Compatibility of Traditional Design and Build with Sustainable Construction
* Renewable Power, Technology and Construction
* Waste and recycled materials
* Insulation – the materials and methods
* Land Remediation

For further information, visit the website [www.ecobuild.co.uk](http://www.ecobuild.co.uk)

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# Conference on Small-scale Forestry and Rural Development:

## The intersection of ecosystems, economics and society

The IUFRO 3.08 Small-scale Forestry International Conference will be hosted by Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology, Galway, Ireland, from 18 to 23 June 2006.

In the past decades, there has been a marked shift in the nature of small-scale forestry. This conference explores the evolving nature of small-scale forestry and the challenges and opportunities this evolution presents to sustainable rural development.

Small-scale forests by their nature, often represent considerable “viability” challenges to their owners and/or to the agencies responsible for developing policies and programmes to support and regulate them. Over the centuries, as society has changed, so too have the demands placed on forests and their subsequent management. In recent years, the emphasis in management objectives appears to have shifted from intensive, exclusive and singular (timber productivity) to a broader, more inclusive multipurpose approach. Concurrent with changes in the motivations for small-scale forest ownership/management, are the challenges of: ensuring continuity of supply from a disparate source; creating new markets for new forest products; and devising methods for internalising the welfare benefits of healthy and diverse forests for the owners of these forests.

The evolving nature of small-scale forestry presents a multitude of questions and challenges for the owners themselves, the practitioners working in the forests, the extension and rural development services that deal with forest owners and the public bodies who represent and regulate them. The organisers are seeking papers that explore the many issues associated with small-scale forestry and rural development and the implications these issues have for ecosystem health, economic viability and societal well-being.

The conference will be hosted by the Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT) located on the outskirts of Galway city, on the west coast of Ireland. It is organised in collaboration with the International Union of Forestry Research Organisations (IUFRO) Research Group 3.08 Small-scale Forestry and supported by COFORD (Council for Forest Research and Development, Ireland) and Teagasc (Irish Agriculture and Food Development Authority). The GMIT campus will be the venue for the conference.

For further information, contact Sarah Wall – email: sarah.wall@gmit.ie

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# Vacancies

The Hydromet Group in the Civil and Environmenal Engineering Department of University College Cork currently seeks applications for two research posts:

* **Postdoctoral fellowship**: Applications are invited for one post-doctoral research fellowship starting 1 February 2006 in the Hydromet Group (www.hydromet.org) in the Civil and Environmental Engineering Department at University College Cork, Ireland. Projects include: Greenhouse gas flux measurements (CO2 and N2O) and modelling in two ecosystems (grasslands and peatlands); carbon stocks in Irish soils; rainfall-runoff modelling; flood forecasting; weather rain ground truthing; nutrient and carbon transport in surface waters. The successful candidate should have a PhD in Science or Engineering and some experience in one or other of the above research areas. A strong numerical, statistical and modelling capacity would be an advantage. The Hydromet group has research projects funded by the Irish EPA and the EU (CarboEurope and NitroEurope). The gross monthly salary is up to €3500.
* **Research Assistant/Technician**: The research encompasses an extensive programme of soil sampling and laboratory analysis. Experienced individuals with a degree in science, engineering or equivalent are encouraged to apply for this position funded by the Environmental Protection Agency. Candidates should be self-motivated, have an ability to work to deadlines and possess a full clean driving licence. Experience in soil science would be an advantage. The contract will be for a period of one year. The successful candidate will collect soil samples throughout Ireland and perform soil analysis at the soils laboratory at Teagasc, Johnstown Castle, Co Wexford. The appointee will be required to work as part of a multidisciplinary project team studying carbon dynamics in Irish soils. Salary up to €33,000 per annum. The post will remain open until filled.

For further information about these posts, visit the website [www.hydromet.org](http://www.hydromet.org). Applications by email with CV and the names, phone numbers and email addresses of three referees should be sent to Prof. Ger Kiely, email g.kiely@ucc.ie.

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# InnovaWood

Eurofortech, Eurifi, Euroligna and Eurowood launched the InnovaWood Initiative in order to create a co-ordinated support infrastructure for innovation in the Forest, Wood-based and Furniture industries sector. InnovaWood is an umbrella organisation that integrates four European networks in the forest, wood-based and furniture industries into a more effective mechanism to support innovation in these sectors. Their mission statement is: "Towards an integrated European research and training area for the forest and wood industry". InnovaWood currently offers the following information resources:

* Website: <http://www.innovawood.com> contains the results of completed projects and ongoing work.
* Newsletter, available in print or email to members, produced four times year, includes issues relevant to the InnovaWood network, inlcuding Framework Programmes, Forest Technology Platform, Education and Training, new projects, funding opportunities for European projects.
* Publications include *STEP: Structural Timber Education Programme*, a two volume book, for students of engineering Harvesthead website and CD ROM. This vocational training project was funded by the Leonardo da Vinci programme and addresses the use of technology in forest harvesting.

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**Copies of the COFORD Annual Report 2004 are still available, free of charge, from the COFORD office. Tel: 01-2130725 or email** [**info@coford.ie**](mailto:info@coford.ie)

1. To-date 24 countries have officially joined Phase III while a number of other countries are in the process of joining. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)