Forestry and Wood Update

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Due to the current postal dispute the Forest Service has asked us to circulate the letter below to our newsletter readership:

# Forest Strategy in Ireland

The Minister for Agriculture and Food, Mr Joe Walsh TD, recently announced the appointment of Peter Bacon and Associates to carry out a study of forestry policy in Ireland. They will be guided in carrying out the study by the following terms of reference:

* Review implementation of the existing strategic plan for the development of the forestry sector in Ireland “*Growing for the Future*”.
* Examine and advise on potential changes to land use in Ireland arising from the reform of the EU Common Agriculture Policy which will impact on various schemes such as the afforestation scheme, the Single Payment Entitlement, REPS and other measures.
* Examine the nature and economic effects of the existing forestry funding mechanisms and the value for money they represent.
* Review national and international timber market developments, the non-timber benefits of forestry and developing environmental requirements.

An important part of this study will involve consultation with stakeholders and other interested parties. To this end you are invited to an information meeting with Peter Bacon and Associates which will be held on **Wednesday, 7 April 2004,** at the Tullamore Court Hotel, Tullamore, Co Offaly, from **10am – 1pm.**

from: Peter Cafferkey, Forest Service, tel: 053 60178

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# COFORD launches two new publications on Irish hardwoods

In association with National Tree Week, and to celebrate 100 years of forestry in Ireland, COFORD launched two exciting new publications on hardwood timber and products derived from Irish-grown trees and forests: the *Guide to Irish Hardwoods* and *Market review and technical performance of Irish hardwoods*. The launch took place on 11 March 2004 at the Stillorgan Park Hotel, Dublin.

Launching the publications, David Nevins, Chairman COFORD, said “The market for hardwood-based products has risen dramatically during the past decade - we imported some 88,000 cubic metres of temperate hardwood in 2002, worth over €33 million – Irish hardwoods have the potential to capture a greater share of this expanding market”. Dr Eugene Hendrick, the Director of COFORD, pointed out that supply has the potential to increase significantly on the back of the 30,000 ha of broadleaves established by government grant-aid over the past 20 years.

David Nevins complimented the work done by Stella Xenopoulou in mapping out the dynamics of the market for home grown hardwoods, identifying the different market segments and products that Irish hardwoods currently fill and service. Her research has also given us a description of the working properties of Irish-grown hardwoods. The *Market review and technical performance of Irish hardwoods* illustrates marketing and working properties and sets a market-based grading system for Irish hardwoods.

Dr Eugene Hendrick announced that all the data collected in the course of the work have been archived on a database, and a special search and query facility has been added to the COFORD website. It gives information on suppliers of home-grown hardwoods, product manufacturers, kiln-drying facilities and related services. He thanked all those manufacturers and suppliers who provided data for the site, as well as Brian O’Sullivan of BOSS solutios who designed the web interface.

Gordon Knaggs, Seamus Heaney (Coillte), David Nevins (Chairman COFORD), Stella Xenopoulou, and Eugene Hendrick (Director COFORD) at the launch of the new COFORD publications.



The *Guide to Irish Hardwoods* is the first guide to the main Irish hardwoods and their properties and uses. It illustrates the extraordinary range of products where Irish hardwoods are used. COFORD called on Gordon Knaggs, one of the leading experts in the specification and use timber, and of hardwoods in particular, to collaborate with Stella Xenopoulou in putting this work together. The publication describes in detail a dozen species, with information on other native species, log conversion, marketing of hardwoods and timber drying schedules. The format of the guide will facilitate updating with new information as it becomes available. David Nevins, Chairman COFORD, thanked Seamus Heaney of Coillte Sawmills and Gavin Munro of T&G Norman, Carlisle, for providing valuable additional information that adds greatly to the guide’s usefulness.

The publications can be obtained from COFORD (tel: 01 716 7700; email: [info@coford.ie](mailto:info@coford.ie)) at a cost of €20 for the *Guide to Irish Hardwoods* and €6 for *Market review and technical performance of Irish hardwoods* (plus postage)*.*

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# Forest vegetation management - FORVAMS - website launched

Waterford Institute of Technology’s (WIT) Forest Vegetation Alternative Management Systems Research Group (FORVAMS) has just launched its website at www.forvams.org. Funded by COFORD under the National Development Plan, and headed by Dr Nick McCarthy, FORVAMS researches alternative methods of managing weeds in our forests. Sensible management of our natural resources and nature conservation has never been as important as today. Public awareness is also growing considerably with events such as the recent National Tree Week and the celebration of 100 years of Irish forestry. The goal of FORVAMS is to investigate alternative methods to herbicides for controlling weeds in our forests. There is increasing emphasis on environmentally friendly practices and thus there will be more pressure for the use of herbicides to be eventually phased out or more environmentally friendly products found. Presently the research team is looking at the use of mulch mats for controlling weeds, in the crucial first four years, around young trees. They hope to secure funding in the future for further studies on ground cover species and biological controls for use as weed management options.

According to Claire McCarthy, researcher at FORVAMS, "The website [www.forvams.org](http://www.forvams.org) provides a platform to publish the groups’ findings and projects, sharing its knowledge with anyone with an interest in vegetation management in forestry". Latest news, research papers and projects pages will provide essential information to professionals and academics alike while the curious visitor will be rewarded with an informative list of forest weeds found in our country and a host of other interesting facts. People working in the industry will find the weed control section most useful with a comprehensive list of chemical, biological and other control methods uploaded over the coming years as the information becomes available and more research is carried out. The discussion forum section of the website, moderated by members of the research group themselves, will be a unique networking platform for people working in the industry throughout Europe - academics, and members of the public.

"In reality it’s a building block which we can add to, together with the experts in the industry and members of the public, and over the years develop an extensive library of forest weeds and alternative management systems that will provide a comprehensive reference tool for everyone involved in forestry," says Dr Nick McCarthy of WIT. The website, developed by Dataworks & Rell Studios in Waterford, will allow content to be administrated by members of the group using an innovative custom-made content management system accessible by them from any location or any computer available to them. According to Marc Roosli, Business Development Manager at Dataworks, "The FORVAMS website, built with long-term success in mind using the latest Microsoft .NET technology, offers ultimate robustness and scalability, equipping the researchers with a reliable everyday working tool."

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# CARBON CORNER

## Ireland’s EU presidency – forests and climate change

As Ireland’s EU Presidency reaches its mid point it is time to reflect on the some the current issues regarding forests and climate change that the EU is involved in.

Most of the rules for how forests will be treated during the first commitment period 2008-2012 were agreed in the Marrakech Accords in 2001. The remaining issues on the agenda centre mainly on rules for small-scale forest projects in the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and how sinks and harvested wood products will be treated in the period after 2012.

Rules and modalities for small-scale forestry projects (less than 8,000 t CO2 per annum[[1]](#footnote-1)) will be under discussion at SBSTA 20 in Bonn in June. In a submission to the UN Convention on Climate Change the EU has indicated ways to simplify the rules to reduce transaction costs and enable projects involving low-income communities and individuals in developing countries to participate in, and benefit from, the CDM of the Kyoto Protocol. Another submission focuses on ways to facilitate participation in the CDM.

The accounting and reporting rules governing forest sinks reflect agreements made during the negotiation process that led from the initial agreement at Kyoto. Of necessity there are significant carbon pools and sinks excluded from the accounting framework. For example the terrestrial carbon sink is by no means fully included in the process. Most of the world’s tropical forests are outside the framework, simply because the relevant countries are not Annex 1 Parties – they have no fixed greenhouse gas emission reduction targets – nor accountable forest sinks. Likewise there is no obligation on countries to account for carbon stock changes and emissions from forests that were in existence before 1990. Parties may, however, elect to account for forest management activities in a part or all of these areas if they choose, under Article 3.4 of the Protocol.

Another significant carbon pool that is not yet fully accounted for under the Kyoto Protocol is harvested wood. At present the default assumption is that once wood is harvested from the forest it is immediately oxidised and returned to the atmosphere. However, in developed countries most harvested wood ends up in solid wood products and paper. These products have varying lifetimes, from weeks to decades, to hundreds of years. Many Parties are of the view that this carbon store should be brought into the accounting framework. There are a number of ways that this could be done. Changes in wood product stocks in a particular country could be tracked over time using production and trade data. Particular product types could be assigned decay functions and changes in stocks followed. Different approaches assign the emissions to either the producing or consuming country. This topic will also be the subject of discussion at SBSTA 20 in Bonn and will no doubt feature in the negotiations surrounding future commitment periods.

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# Good news for the planting programme: The Single Payment Scheme

The Minister for Agriculture and Food, Mr Joe Walsh TD, announced that discussions between the Member States and the European Commission on the detailed implementing rules for the Single Payment Scheme have been concluded in Brussels.

The Minister recalled that political agreement on the Mid-Term Review of the Agenda 2000 agreement was reached on 26 June 2003 and the corresponding Council Regulation was subsequently published on 29 September 2003.

Following wide ranging consultations with interested parties the Minister announced, in October 2003, that Ireland had decided to opt for a fully decoupled single payment scheme to be introduced with effect from 2005.

The Minister said that the initial draft of the Commission implementing rules contained a number of issues of concern to Ireland and that, following detailed negotiations with the Commission, he was happy to report that the final text of the regulation addresses the main concerns raised by Ireland.

Mr Walsh highlighted some of the issues addressed in the detailed rules:

Land availability in 2005 and subsequent years

The Council Regulation provides that the single payment is calculated by taking the three yearly average number of animals/arable hectares which attracted payment in the reference period 2000, 2001 and 2002 and multiplying them by the payment rate for 2002 in respect of livestock or by €383.04 per hectare in the case of Arable Aid. The number of payment entitlements is determined by dividing this single payment amount by the average number of hectares declared over the three-year period. In order to activate those payment entitlements in 2005 a farmer is required to have one eligible hectare of land for each payment entitlement. The requirement that individual farmers need to have 100% of the average land area that they had during the reference period would have resulted in serious problems for those Irish farmers who, for specific reasons, declare less lands in 2005 or subsequent years, than the average area of land that they farmed during the reference period.

The Minister said that under the provisions of the implementing Regulation a Member State may now make use of its National Reserve in order to consolidate payment entitlements for certain categories of farmers on the actual number of hectares of land farmed in 2005 provided that the farmer declares all the hectares available to him/her in 2005 and the total area declared is equal to at least 50% of the average number of hectares declared during the reference period. The provisions can be applied to the following categories of farmers:

* Farmers who have afforested some of their land since the beginning of the reference period;
* Farmers who have disposed of land to a Public Authority for non-agricultural use;
* Farmers who had land leased/rented in during the reference period but the lease/rental agreement has since expired; and,
* Farmers who declared lands situated in Northern Ireland during the reference period.

This concession can be availed of more than once provided that the farmer concerned continues to declare at least 50% of the land area farmed during the reference period. The Minister said that this provision would also be beneficial to those farmers who are contemplating afforestation in 2005 or subsequent years.

Where a farmer benefits from this concession all of his consolidated payment entitlements will be regarded as having come from the National Reserve. The entitlements concerned cannot be sold or leased out for 5 years and the farmer must use all his entitlements himself each year for a period of 5 years otherwise any entitlements not used will revert to the National Reserve.

Minister Walsh pointed out that the provisions relating to land availability cannot be applied to any farmer who disposed of land by way of sale or lease other than the sale of land to a public authority for non-agricultural use.

Farmers who did not submit an Area Aid application form during the reference period.

Farmers who were in receipt of Direct Payments during the reference period but who were not required to submit an Area Aid application form are now entitled to have a number of single payment entitlements determined by reference to the number of hectares of land declared on their 2004 Area Aid application. The categories of farmers involved include farmers who were paid Slaughter Premium only, Livestock Premium on up to 15 livestock units and Ewe Premium for farmers situated outside of the Disadvantaged Areas.

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# New phytosanitary standard for Irish pallets

*Article contributed by Gerard Cahalane, Forest Service*

International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs) are prepared by the secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) as part of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation’s (FAO) global and technical assistance in plant quarantine.

ISPM No 15, *Guidelines for Regulating Wood Packaging Material in International Trade*, describes phytosanitary measures to reduce the risk of introduction and/or spread of quarantine pests associated with wood packaging material (including dunnage), made of coniferous and non-coniferous raw wood, in use in international trade.

The approved treatment measures are heat treatment (a phytosanitary treatment which is different to kiln drying) to achieve a minimum wood core temperature of 56oC for 30 minutes or fumigation to a prescribed specification with methyl bromide.

In practice pallets, crates, boxes, etc. in use in the transport of goods of all kinds must be heat treated or fumigated and the wooden packaging must be stamped on at least two sides with an officially approved mark verifying the treatment and the registration number of the producer of the packaging and incorporating the IPPC logo.

The following countries have introduced or are in the process of introducing ISPM 15 for wood packaging imports: Canada, United States, Mexico, Korea, People’s Republic of China (note China currently has a different marking/certification requirement), India and the EU (imports from non EU countries).

In Ireland, the Forest Service, Department of Agriculture and Food, is responsible for implementing ISPM 15 and for ensuring that systems for exports meet the requirement set out in the standard. In this respect the Forest Service, with the assistance of the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI), have put in place a scheme comprising the registration and auditing of kiln facilities, the registration of pallet and other wood packaging manufacturers, the registration of fumigation companies, marking systems and compliance standards.

Further information and a copy of ISPM 15 is available on the Forest Service website, currently located at <http://www.dcmnr.ie/display.asp/pg=527>. Further advice can be obtained by contacting the Forest Service Inspectorate at 01 6782156 or [planthealth@dcmnr.gov.ie](mailto:planthealth@dcmnr.gov.ie)

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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 (CPD).

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

Day 1:

• *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.

Expert speakers from across Europe will speak at this key conference. Announcing the conference, Mr David Nevins, Chairman COFORD, stated that “among the areas under discussion will be forest certification, the conflict between wood fibre for energy and for traditional wood products, training and innovation in wood products”.

## Economic Impact

Forests play an important role in the economic and social well being of Europe. As well as producing wood, European forests play an essential part in biodiversity, habitat conservation, recreation and carbon storage. Within the enlarged EU, it is estimated that over fourteen million Europeans derive a livelihood from forestry. Following the accession of a further ten states on 1 May, the enlarged EU[[2]](#footnote-2) will have 36% of its land area under forest cover.

In 2000, the European woodworking sector (EU-15) had a turnover of €150 billion. Europe is a major producer of wood based panels, paper and sawn lumber.

Wood also provides an important source of renewable energy.

Analysis by the European Commission has shown that innovation is a key to fostering economic growth within the EU. This applies to all sectors including the forestry and the wood processing sector.

One of the challenges facing the European forest products sector is to improve its competitiveness whilst maintaining strong environmental standards.

Forest products companies who have moved to re-engineer their processes and products to take account of such changing market circumstances will be showcased at the conference “Future Issues for Forest Industries in Europe”.

## Certification

Increasingly, the end users of wood products require that the timber products which they use are sourced from forests which are independently certified as being managed on a sustainable basis.

Over the past decade, forest certification has grown in importance with over 177.4 million hectares of forest now covered by forest certification schemes. Forest certification continues to grow at a rapid rate. The area of forest covered by certification schemes grew by 31% in 2003. Three of the main certification schemes are the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes (PEFC) and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI).

By early 2004, these three agencies represent 76% of certified forests covering a combined forest area of 134 million hectares.

There is some concern that the existence of multiple certification initiatives may dilute the impact of certification by confusing consumers. The timber trade has increasingly called for mutual recognition between these schemes.

Speakers from the FSC, PEFC and SFI will speak at the April conference. The view of certification from a market perspective will be outlined by Dr Penny Bienz from the Timber Trade Federation (TTF).

## Wood Products or Renewable Energy?

Sellers of industrial roundwood have traditionally sold their harvested timber to industry to produce pulp, paper, wood panels or sawn lumber.

The prospect of using wood biomass to generate heat/electricity has created a new market outlook for forest products. From a growers’ perspective, the emergence of multiple markets may improve the market for harvested roundwood.

However, traditional industries now face a challenge to source a competitive source of raw material supply for their processing facilities. The conference will explore these potentially conflicting markets for wood biomass and will also hear of new emerging processes for producing liquid bio-fuels from wood biomass.

## Conference Tours

The conference programme includes visits to key forest and processing sites in Ireland. The use of information technology in timber processing will be seen in visits to forest harvesting sites and during a plant tour of the Weyerhaeuser Europe MDF facility. One of Europe’s largest MDF producers, Weyerhaeuser Europe manufactures in excess of 350,000 m3 of MDF per annum at its Irish facility at Clonmel, Co Tipperary.

A second tour will visit Coillte’s state of the art nursery and seed centre at Ballintemple, County Carlow. Coillte produces fifty million plants per annum to satisfy the national target for afforestation of 20,000 hectares. An afforestation site will also be visited to discuss practical issues relating to plantation forestry.

The conference organisers welcome attendance from all with an interest in the future of the forest sector in Europe.

Full details and registration forms are available at [www.coford.ie/Conf2004/conference.htm](http://www.coford.ie/Conf2004/conference.htm). To request further information about the event, contact [InnovaWood](mailto:office@innovawood.com) or [COFORD](mailto:info@coford.ie).

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# Timber quality and mechanical strength grading workshop

Changes to CEN standards and market expectations increasingly require tighter specifications for construction materials. In addition, export markets require that structural timber be mechanically strength graded. Many new and emerging technologies are now becoming more readily available.



Speakers at the workshop on timber quality and mechanical strength grading included Jean-Michel Leban, Jim Harrington, Michael Bourke, John Fennessy, John Ersson, Tim Reynolds, and Valez Picardo.

To address these and other related issues, a one-day workshop for sawmillers, timber graders, forest owners and students of timber technology and forestry was organised by COFORD in the Heritage Hotel, Portlaoise on 25 March 2004. Over 20 participants attended the meeting and the following papers were presented (the presentations can be downloaded from [www.coford.ie/newsandevents/seminars.html](http://www.coford.ie/newsandevents/seminars.html)):

* *Models for the timber quality assessment of the actual forest resource – Methodologies for Sitka spruce* by Dr Jean-Michel Leban, Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique (INRA), Champenoux, Nancy, France.
* *EU and FC Compression Wood Project Pii Timber Scanning Technology* by Tim Reynolds, Building Research Establishment, UK.
* *Pre-selection for predictability in drying Sitka spruce to low moisture content levels* by Michael Bourke, Wood Technology Centre, University of Limerick.
* *History, theory and practice of machine grading in Ireland*byValez Picardo, Enterprise Ireland, Dublin.
* *Overview of developments of relevant standards* by Jim Harrington of James Harrington and Associates
* *Grading machines available for structural timber production*byJim Harrington of James Harrington and Associates

Overviews of a number of machines were presented by their manufacturer/producer:

* The Ersson ESG 240 by Mr John Ersson, John Ersson Engineering, Sweden.
* The EuroGrecomat 702 by Mr Freddie Giudiceandrea Microtec, Italy.

For further information, contact COFORD at 01 7167700 or email [info@coford.ie](mailto:info@coford.ie).

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# National Forest Strategy: A vision for the future

Over 130 delegates attended this conference on 12 March 2004 at the Johnstown House Hotel, Enfield, Co Meath. The PowerPoint presentations made by the speakers are available on the COFORD website at <http://www.coford.ie/newsandevents/seminars.html>.

The conference was opened by Mr Noel Treacy TD, Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture and Food, and chaired by Mr Michael Dowling, Head of Agri-Strategy, AIB Bank, and Mr Ciarán FitzGerald, Director, Irish Business and Employers Confederation. Presentations were:

• *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 was 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 were allocated to this event.

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# Woodlands of Ireland Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of Woodlands of Ireland took place at Charleville Castle, Tullamore, Co Offaly, on 26 March. The meeting was chaired by Diarmuid McAree, Chief Forestry Inspector, Forest Service. Cara Doyle, Project Co-ordinator, presented a progress report for 2003 and highlighted the Native Woodland Conference on *The past, present and future of Ireland’s Native Woodlands,* scheduled for September*.*

Pat Doolin (Coillte) presented an update and report on the People’s Millenium Forests, and Declan Little presented a progress report on the Woodlands of Ireland technical advisory group developments. The meeting concluded with election results for steering group members for 2004/2005.

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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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# Conservation of Genetic Resources of Noble Hardwoods

The next meeting of the Noble Hardwoods Network will take place in Arezzo, Italy from 22 to 24 April 2004. The theme for the meeting is *Genetic conservation, tree breeding and utilization of noble hardwoods*. The meeting is to be hosted by the Italian Istituto Sperimentale per la Selvicoltura (ISSA). National representatives from most European countries are expected to attend, including Iceland which is participating for the first time.

The Noble Hardwoods Network Group commenced in 1996 and held one of its meetings in Ireland in May 2001. The tree species understood as Noble Hardwoods include ash (*Fraxinus*), lime (*Tilia*), alder (*Alnus*), elm (*Ulmus*), maple (*Acer*) and the family Rosaceae. Noble Hardwoods are sometimes called an overlooked group of tree species. This is because of their common property – the reduced competition capacity in forest stands, especially in higher age classes. Noble Hardwoods usually grow scattered in mixed-species forests where they make up a small proportion of total forest cover. They require good sites and are characterised by high quality timber.

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# Walnut Symposium

The 5th International Walnut Symposium will take place from 9 to 13 November 2004 in Sorrento, Italy. For the first time, all the aspects in relationship with the ‘walnut plant’will be considered. The research carried out at world level on biological aspects, propagation and plant defenses, have often a common base whether the final products are fruit, timber, dye or natural pharmacological compounds. On the contrary, different plant managements should be carried out in field plantations for different end purposes. Moreover, in some countries and situations, the combination of fruit and timber production is desirable.

The symposium will be an opportunity to compare different and various experiences, improve the knowledge and stimulate new objectives under ‘the walnut crown’. Scientific and technical contributions on walnut for fruit, wood, and other productions will be presented and discussed. Experts involved and interested in walnut will compare and exchange experiences on the walnut ‘filiere’ from the nut to the furniture and other uses.

For regular updated information, please visit the symposium website: www.walnut2004.sistemacongressi.com

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# Wood Material Science Opening Seminar

The Wood Material Science Opening Seminar will take place at the Marina Congress Centre in Helsinki, Finland, on 6 April 2004. The seminar will provide information about the Finnish-Swedish collaboration in the field of wood material science and about wood material research in other European countries, and offers industrial views of the competitive ability and the sustainability of the forest cluster. The research projects will also be presented in a poster exhibition and in the annual report of the programme available at the seminar.

The invitation and the programme are available at <http://www.woodwisdom.fi/indexpage.asp?PageId=ResearchProject&Language=EN>.

To register or for further information, please contact Iris Humala, Wood Wisdom Research Programme, email: [iris.humala@woodwisdom.fi](mailto:iris.humala@woodwisdom.fi), tel: +358 9 3193 6771.

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# Biomechanics and safety of trees

A one day seminar from the world’s leading expert, Prof. Dr Claus Mattheck, on the biomechanics and safety of trees, will take place at the National Botanic Gardens Conference Centre, Dublin, on Friday 28 May 2004. Hosted by the Arboricultural Association – Irish Branch, the cost will be €160.00.

For further information, contact Roy Goodwin (AAIB Chair): tel: 041-9873584 or email [goodwinarborist@eircom.net](mailto:goodwinarborist@eircom.net). Further details may be found at [www.geocities.com/arbassoc](http://www.geocities.com/arbassoc).

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# Environmental RTDI Programme 2000-2006 - Phase 4

## Advance Notice of Call for Proposals in the Area of Sustainable Development

The Irish government policy document *Sustainable Development: A Strategy for Ireland*, was published in 1997. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) seeks to support this policy by identifying barriers to implementation of sustainable development (SD) in Ireland. Barriers include the lack of data or knowledge and the lack of a framework to guide SD objectives. Research is part of the solution to making progress with SD policy implementation. The EPA therefore will shortly be inviting proposals for environmental research in which the topic of SD is addressed.

Further information regarding the scope and content of this call will be given in a technical description document (D4/2004) which will be available on the research and development pages of the EPA web-site. A specification will be provided for the fellowship positions along with an outline of suggested research themes in the areas of management of peatlands and implementing SD in Ireland.

The EPA intends to commit approximately €2m to projects under this call, if a sufficient number of high quality proposals are received.

It is intended that this call will be announced in early April and that application forms and other documentation related to call will be available on the EPA website from then. The closing date for applications will be in mid-May. The main areas included in the forthcoming call for proposals will be:

* Implementing Sustainable Development in Ireland
* Future Management of Peatlands in Ireland[[3]](#footnote-3)
* Sectoral Sustainability Strategies
* Fellowships: Sustainable Development and Local Authorities

Please do not seek application documents at this stage. The call will be formally announced in the national press and at www.epa.ie**.**

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# Call for nominations for the Marcus Wallenberg Prize

The Marcus Wallenberg Prize is an international award for scientific achievements in forestry and technology of the forest products industries.

The purpose of the prize is to recognise, encourage and stimulate pathbreaking scientific achievements which contribute significantly to broadening knowledge and to technical development within the fields of importance to forestry and forest industries.

The prize includes an award that currently amounts to two million Swedish Crowns. The prize is awarded to individuals only. Every year up to 500 organisations around the world are invited to nominate candidates for the prize.

Examples of fields of importance to forestry and forest industries are:

* **Forestry:** genetics, systematics and tree breeding; silviculture and agroforestry; forest ecology and tree physiology; biometrics, computing and remote sensing; forest management, forest protection and forestry operations.
* **Forest Products Industries:** forest products including wood and wood processing; papermaking fibres; paper and paper board and processes for their manufacture; the recycling of forest products and innovations to improve their use and environmental performance.

Every year a large number of organisations - universities, institutes, academies, research centres - are invited to nominate candidates for the prize. Those who might have suggestions of suitable candidates for nomination to the prize may contact the secretariat to be advised on an appropriate nominating organisation to approach. The achievements of nominated candidates are evaluated by a special Selection Committee.

For further information, visit [www.mwp.org](http://www.mwp.org)

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# Yorkshire-based joint venture between Renewable Fuels Ltd and Drax Power Ltd

Drax Power Limited is the first power station in the UK to use 'Short Rotation Willow Coppice' in a co-firing application in their 4000 megawatt coal fired power station in North Yorkshire. The trial represents a significant step towards achieving the Government's targets under the Renewables Obligation requiring 25% of all biomass co-fired in 2009 to be derived from energy crops, 50% in 2010 and 75% in 2011.

Renewable Fuels Ltd (RFL), a specialist biomass fuel supply company located in Escrick near York, has negotiated a contract for processed energy crops produced from short rotation willow coppice to be supplied to Drax Power Limited. The energy crops have been harvested from the 1,500 hectares of short rotation willow coppice (SRC) that was originally planted for the ARBRE project at Eggborough, North Yorkshire. Bob Smith, Managing Director of RFL, said that this joint venture is the first major step in creating a real biomass industry in the UK and he looks forward to a substantial growth in energy crop development.

The material will be processed into specification fuel for blending into the coal streams at Drax Power Station located near Selby North Yorkshire. Drax is the largest, cleanest and most efficient coal fired power station in the UK. Its requirement for biomass will be significant and energy crops in the form of SRC could form a substantial part of the biomass fuel input by 2009. Drax Power is keen to support rural and local economies and SRC can be grown extensively within Yorkshire given the right incentives and markets. The Drax contract is a significant step towards securing a sustainable market and the development of biomass fuel supply infrastructure in Yorkshire.

UK Energy Minister, Stephen Timms, said: "This announcement is excellent news not only for the region but also for the environment. It shows that renewable energy can bring economic and environmental benefits in equal measure. Drax Power Station is reinforcing its position as the cleanest and greenest of our coal-fired power stations while at the same time making a real contribution to the local rural communities and the ARBRE fanners in particular. Equally Renewable Fuels Ltd has played an invaluable role in bringing this deal to fruition. This is an excellent partnership between the rural community and Drax Power with clear benefits for all concerned. It also makes a valuable contribution to the development and deployment of bio energy and to our target of 10% of electricity supplied from renewable sources by 2010."

Renewable Energy Growers (REG), one of the first UK energy crop Producer Groups created under the DEFRA scheme, represents 60 growers and this winter has successfully harvested over 300 ha of SRC. The 14,000 tonnes plus of harvested product will be supplied to Renewable Fuels' processing facility at Pollington near Drax Power station, where it will be processed to specification fuel.

Renewable Energy Growers and Renewable Fuel have been working for the last 18 months to secure a contract in the co-firing market. Renewable Fuels and REG are confidence that this contract marks the way for continued expansion of energy crops in the UK providing the much needed stimulus to the agricultural industry to begin to provide a significant proportion of the UK's energy requirements in the coming years.

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1. By way of comparison, Ireland’s target for sinks over the period 2008-2012 is 1,000,000 t carbon dioxide per annum. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. New EU accession states are Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. With regard to research on sustainable management of peatlands, it is expected that this will take the form of a single integrated multi-disciplinary project bringing together complementary skills and expertise from different organisations and disciplines. An initial scoping document is available for this project by e-mail from ertdi@epa.ie. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)