.

Forestry and Wood Update

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# Wood energy week

Wood Energy Week 2006 is a week long programme of wood heating information days, site visits, training workshops and seminars. These events are co-hosted by COFORD and SEI REIO, and take place at five different locations around Ireland from 22 to 26 May 2006.

[Click here to download the full information brochure](https://www.coford.ie/iopen24/pub/pub/Seminars/2006/WEW06/WEW06.pdf) ; [click here to download the registration form](https://www.coford.ie/iopen24/pub/pub/Seminars/2006/WEW06/WEW06-RegistrationForm.pdf)

* Monday 22 May: Wood heating information day and the launch of Wood Energy Week 2006 at Gartan Outdoor Education Centre, Church Hill, Letterkenny, Co Donegal – contact SEI to book or for further information.
* Tuesday 23 May: Wood heating information day at Share Village Outdoor Education Centre, Lisnaskea, Co Fermanagh – contact SEI to book or for further information.
* Wednesday 24 May: Wood biomass harvesting supply chain workshop at Mount Juliet Hotel, Thomastown, Kilkenny – contact COFORD to book or for further information.
* Thursday 25 May: Seminar on developing a quality wood fuel supply chain at Teagasc Headquarters, Oak Park, Carlow – contact SEI to book or for further information.
* Friday 26 May: Wood biomass harvesting supply chain workshop at Bewley's Hotel, Ballsbridge, Dublin – contact COFORD to book or for further information.

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# Wood Energy Advisory Service

The free advisory service on [www.woodenergy.ie](http://www.woodenergy.ie) is available and queries are being attended to by Pieter D. Kofman via email. Queries about the harvesting and supply chain sector of the wood energy industry, can be submitted online. Pieter can also be contacted between 9 and 12 am via Skype – the free software can be downloaded from [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com) and allows telephone calls to be conducted via your computer, free of charge.

Please note that queries about boilers, stoves or approved installers should be directed to Sustainable Energy Ireland, Renewable Energy Information Office, Shinagh House, Bandon, Co Cork. Tel: 023-42193, Fax: 023-29154, Email: renewables@reio.ie.

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# CARBON CORNER

## REFIT Programme launches as price of carbon collapses

Over the past month oil and related fuel prices have risen sharply, again, on foot of the Iranian issue and general supply uncertainties, and the fact that significant profits can be made anticipating rises and falls in the price of a barrel of oil. It is, to coin a phrase, a highly volatile market – one in which industry and governments are faced with a great deal of uncertainty in planning future energy supply strategies.

Market uncertainties are driving policy makers, slowly, down the renewables road. Evidence is the government’s *Renewable Energy Feed In Tariff (REFIT) Programme*, launched on Monday this week. The scheme seeks to promote the use of electricity generated from renewables such as wind, hydro and biomass. A key part of the scheme is a grid feed-in tariff price. For biomass it is capped at 7.2 eurocent per kilowatt hour. Will this induce a cascade of biomass from forests? Very unlikely, certainly the price is not going to get anybody too excited. What should the price be? Watch this space.

Monday this week also saw an article in *The* *Guardian* headlined *Carbon trading market fluctuates wildly after figures released early*. This was the crash in carbon prices (to around €11 per tonne carbon dioxide from close on €30 per tonne, over the space of several days, at the end of April). What happened was that markets were responding as the supply/demand dynamics of EC Emissions Trading Scheme allowances became clearer. A number of Member States finalised their allocation plans for installations under the scheme. Simply put, industry has been given more allowances than had been anticipated – so the level of purchases required will be less. There is sting in the tail though – big emitters such as Britain, Germany and Italy have yet to announce their allocation plans – and that may change the market dynamic.

The prices of oil and of carbon dioxide are not unrelated of course – a rise in oil prices should in the long term see a fall in the price of carbon – as users economise on fuel, and switch to less polluting alternatives. But the equation is not simple, and part of the underlying dynamic is the level of allocation to installations – their distance to target. If the gap is wide then installations will consider switching to renewables, if it is cheaper than purchasing allowances (the lesser-of-two-evils); in turn they have less need to buy allowances - good for the environment, bad for business (in the short term). If the allowance gap is close to business-as-usual then there is little incentive for purchases or to reduce emissions, and there are plenty of allowances to trade (which is what caused the price collapse last week) - good for business, bad for the environment. Is there somewhere in the middle that is good for both the environment and business? Maybe not, but if the market price continues its downward trend there will be serious questions to answer about the effectiveness of the ETS in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

*Image from Point Carbon*

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# Forest Vegetation Management – A World Perspective

This conference will take place on Friday 12 May 2006 at the Waterford Institute of Technology. The event is hosted by COFORD in co-operation with Waterford Institute of Technology and COST Action E47: European Network for Forest Vegetation Management: Towards Environmental Sustainability, which is chaired by Dr Nick McCarthy of WIT. The Action brings together the leading scientists in vegetation management area in Europe.

Successful afforestation and forest regeneration requires young tree seedlings to be protected from vegetation that may compete for scarce resources such as water, nutrients and light. In recent years, forest managers have come to rely on herbicides as the cheapest and most effective means of controlling this competing non-crop vegetation.

In Europe there is an increasing political and public debate about pesticide use within forests, due to concerns about potential impacts on groundwater, biodiversity and human health. Government and European Union regulation, and voluntary forest certification schemes, aim to encourage a reduction and in some cases an eventual elimination of pesticide use within woodlands. However, for the most part, effective alternatives to herbicides do not currently exist. Without the knowledge or technology to implement effective alternatives, forest managers’ ability to protect and regenerate both natural and plantation forests will be severely threatened.

The main objective of COST Action E47 is to help forest managers reduce their dependence on herbicides in Europe’s forests by facilitating and coordinating the development of alternatives based on sound forest management principles. Any new methods that are identified must also recognise society’s need for the sustainable production of a wide variety of forest resources, and be sustainable, environmentally sound, socially acceptable and economically viable. To date there are 15 countries (including Ireland, UK, France and Germany) involved in the action which started in April 2005.

This conference will provide an insight into what other countries have done to control vegetation in forests and disseminate knowledge and information to foresters, interested parties, and the public.

The objective of the COFORD-funded vegetation management research programme (FORVAMS) is to reduce dependence on herbicides in Irish forests by investigating and developing suitable alternatives, including the use of mulch mats in controlling vegetation. The conference will include a visit to a mulch mat trial on ash and Sitka spruce at a reforestation site in Aclamon, New Ross, Co Wexford.

Presentations will include:

* Forestry herbicides used around the world and their environmental impacts by Dr Jerry Michael, U.S. Forest Service, and Auburn University School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, Alabama
* Mechanisms of tree seedlings competition by neighbouring herbaceous and woody vegetation in forests by Dr Philippe Balandier, CEMAGREF, France
* Towards reduced herbicide use in forest vegetation management by Dr Keith Little, Institute for Commercial Forestry Research, South Africa
* Biological control - a tool for the integrated management of invasive alien weeds by Dr Marion Seier, CABI Bioscience, UK

There will also be a field trip to vegetation management plots in the afternoon.

[The booking form can be downloaded from the COFORD website.](https://www.coford.ie/iopen24/pub/pub/Seminars/VegMan/20060512.pdf)

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# Small-scale Forestry and Rural Development - The intersection of ecosystems, economics and society

IUFRO 3.08 Small-scale Forestry International Conference to be hosted by Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology Galway, 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 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.

We 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 in collaboration with COFORD, Coillte and Teagasc.

For further information, consult the website <http://ns2.gmit.ie/information/conferences/Forestry/> or email Sarah Wall (sarah.wall@gmit.ie)

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# BIHIP News

**Sycamore Group**

Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) is native to central and southern Europe where it occurs in mountainous regions from the Pyrenees to northern France, and eastwards to the Black Sea. It is likely to have been introduced into Ireland in the 17th century and, although the initial performance of the species was impressive, growth of many plantations in the more recent past has been disappointing, possibly due to unsuitable provenance choice and poor site selection. The susceptibility of the species to damage by the grey squirrel is of major concern. However, sycamore timber is highly valued in the market place and is much sought after.

Michael Carey is the chairman of the Sycamore Group of the British and Irish Hardwood Improvement (BIHIP) Programme. The main objective of the group is to locate and mark the best 150 trees across Britain and Ireland to form the basis of a sycamore breeding programme. The 10 best potential stands for selection as seed stands will be identified to provide better quality reproductive material for the nursery sector. The inclusion of some material in the programme from other European sources, including Denmark where the species was introduced in the 18th century and is now accepted as native, is being considered.

The group held its latest meeting at Otley, Leeds, in March 2005, where progress to date and planned future work were discussed and agreed. Part of the programme included a visit to selected, high quality sycamore stands at Farnley Estate, planted between 1930 and 1950, now in the 8-10 yield class range.

Approximately 70 plus-trees have been selected in Britain and the search in Ireland for more will commence in May 2006. Scion material has been collected from most trees and is being propagated at the Teagasc Research Centre at Kinsealy, Co Dublin, and at East Malling Research Centre in England. The medium term objective is to establish clonal and breeding seedling seed orchards for the species in Britain and Ireland, and to fast-track the introduction of seed from selected and registered seed stands into the nursery sector. Funding for the work has been provided by COFORD, the Forest Service, Forestry Commission (UK), the Northern Ireland Forest Service and Woodland Heritage. Coillte is also participating in this programme and is committed to the provision of suitable sites for future seed orchards.

The group is anxious to hear of the location of any outstanding specimens or stands of the species. It is also acutely aware of the threat posed by the grey squirrel and is actively supporting initiatives on managing the pest in Britain and Ireland. For further information, email john.fennessy@coford.ie or careyml@eircom.net.

**Management Meeting**

The BIHIP Management Committee Meeting took place at the Northmoor Trust, Little Wittenham, Oxford, on 26 April 2006. Issues discussed included:

* British and Irish Hardwood Trust – The British component has been established and the final draft of the Trust Deed for Ireland has just been completed. John Fennessy gave an update on BIHT’s charitable status in Ireland. Work is continuing with the Revenue Commissioner with the objective having the trust established by the end of the year.
* The Sir Eric Weiss Prize – this is for the best plus-tree identified for each of the species groups in BIHIP, as well as the best entry for Scotland, Wales and Ireland. However, the level and quality of entries received was poor and it was decided that it might be more cost effective, in agreement with the sponsor, if the groups themselves could locate the best trees.
* Species Group Issues – Intellectual property rights are still unresolved, and this was discussed further. Other issues included the establishment of “clonal collections” of all BIHIP material in Britain and Ireland in order to safeguard it. It was agreed that the development of a clonal archive in Ireland would be sensible safeguard. There might be potential Irish funding to cover the costs of grafting if East Malling Research would supply scion material.
* The BIHIP Brand – Progress in developing and enforcing a “BIHIP” quality brand in the context of the Forest Reproductive Material regulation was also discussed. It was decided that a subgroup should be created to look at these issues in more detail and consider how they would work within the practical constraints of the market and the nursery trade.

The next field day and AGM will be held on 20 and 21 September 2006. Details will be made available once arrangements are finalised.

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# Hardwood Matters

In January 2005 COFORD published the first issue of Hardwood Matters – a free catalogue for advertising hardwood timber. The catalogue featured both a “for sale” and “wanted” section and has been published in January and July of each year ever since.

All issues published to date have been well received and have been widely distributed in the forestry and wood processing areas, and the volume of material continues to grow. The fourth issue in this series will be published in July 2006 and if you wish to submit an entry, please do so before Friday 2 June 2006. Further information on “Hardwood Matters” as well as previous issues can be viewed by visiting our website at [www.coford.ie](http://www.coford.ie), where entries for the next issue can be submitted online.

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# OAK 2006 Conference Update

The OAK 2006 IUFRO Conference on Advances in the Principles and Practices of Oak Silviculture and Genetics will be held at Stevens Point, Wisconsin, USA, from 21 to 30 September 2006. This conference is a joint meeting of two IUFRO Working Groups: 1.01.06 Ecology and Silviculture of Oaks and 2.08.05 Genetics of Quercus. The objective of this conference is to bring together forest scientists and managers from throughout the world to exchange information regarding current research and practices concerning the silviculture and genetics of Quercus (Oak).

Forest scientists and managers are invited to submit proposals for either oral or poster presentations in a subject area that is consistent with and related to the theme of the conference: “Advances in the Principles and Practices of Oak Silviculture and Genetics”. Joint and concurrent sessions will be featured. See Author Guidelines at http://www.uwsp.edu/forestry/oak2006 for instructions.

A pre-conference excursion to southwestern Wisconsin will take place from 21 to 23 September. A post-conference excursion to northwestern Wisconsin will take place from 28 to 30 September.

For more information, contact Dr Robert Rogers (email: oak2006@uwsp.edu) or click on to http://www.uwsp.edu/forestry/oak2006.

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# Sustainable Energy Ireland presents The Energy Show 2006

Ireland’s national showcase for Energy, the Energy Show 2006, takes place in the RDS Industries Hall in Dublin on 10 and 11 May. The event is a forum for suppliers and customers of sustainable energy technologies and services to meet, share views and transact business.

The show will include a two-day trade exhibition with a comprehensive and varied seminar programme covering all aspects of energy efficiency and renewable energy relevant to all sectors of Irish business.

Sustainable Energy Ireland is organising the event and is encouraging professionals from across all sectors of Irish enterprise and particularly those with an interest in renewable energy to attend and find out how the latest sustainable and renewable energy technologies and practices can benefit their businesses.

As part of this year’s event, SEI will host a number of special seminars over the two days on important sustainable energy related issues including:

• Liquid Biofuels,

• Wood Heating,

• Wind Energy,

• Energy Efficient Buildings,

• Renewable Heating and Building for the Future.

These seminars are intended to serve as a discussion forum on sustainable energy technologies and services.

For further information on The Energy Show 2006, including details on how to register for the seminars, please log onto www.sei.ie/energyshow or email energyshow@registrationdesk.ie

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# ELVA – Offers training week in Güssing, Austria, November 2006

ELVA (Establishing Local Value Chains for RES Heat in local communities) is a European-funded project that aims to contribute to the development of local value chains for RES heat (heat from renewable energy sources). As part of this project a training week will take place in Güssing, Austria, from 13 to 17 November. The main aim of the ELVA project is to study existing successful experiences with RES heat such as those from countries like Austria and design a market model based on these findings. The ELVA project will provide local communities with a methodology for creating business around RES heat development. Local authorities play a key role in this effort, and together with the energy advisors they make a significant contribution to the technical side of RES heat projects. Both these target groups will be trained directly by Austrian experts.

The course will focus primarily policy makers; the latter part of the week will target energy advisors. A field trip will also take place as part of the training. The aim of this course is to educate experts in organisations that are active in promoting RES heat activities in their region. The course covers a number of topics that will appeal to local authorities, energy advisors and anyone involved in the development of RES heat projects, e.g. success factors and lessons learned from bioenergy use in Austria, experiences of policy makers, wood fuels (characteristics, technology, etc), key technical and legal issues/cost figures for small and larger biomass heating projects, etc. The costs for the whole week are €700 and for the Sunday to Wednesday programme €400. Applicants will be offered a small financial support to partly cover their travel costs.

For further information on any events, publications and progress associated with the project please contact Jitske Burgers, European Projects Co-ordinator, SWS Group on (023) 41271 or email jitske.burgers@sws.ie.

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# The 6th Anque International Congress of Chemistry

The subject selected for this congress is “Chemistry and sustainable development”. Chemistry and chemical engineering contribute to sustainable development in that they supply clean technologies and new products and monitor and interpretate the influence of technological activities on the future of the Earth. The congress has been organised in the following seven main areas:

- Chemistry in the resources management.

- Chemistry in the development of sustainable processes and products.

- Materials and sustainable development.

- Wastes and emissions.

- Chemistry in the improvement of the quality of life.

- Chemistry in the education and social communication for sustainable development.

- Environmental management.

Information about the congress can be found at www.anque2006.org

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