.

Forestry and Wood Update

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# New COFORD Council

Ms Mary Wallace T.D., Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food with responsibility for Forestry, has announced the appointment of a new Council for COFORD.

Minister Wallace said that, since its establishment in 1993, COFORD has made a significant contribution to forest research and development. She thanked the previous Council members for their contribution. She added that, with the beginning of a new forestry programme, growing awareness of the role of forestry in climate change and renewable energy, and given the Government's commitment to forestry as evident from the recent roll-out of FEPS, now is a good time to appoint a new Council.

Following the appointment of Mr Michael Lynn of Woodfab Timber Ltd as Chairperson of the Council, the new appointments are:

* Pat Hennessy, Irish Farmers Association
* John Joe O’Boyle, Forest Service Northern Ireland
* Michael Glennon, Glennon Sawmills
* Willie Fitzgerald, Enterprise Ireland
* John McCarthy, None so Hardy Nurseries
* Donal Whelan, Irish Timber Growers Association
* Tim Crowley, Coillte Teoranta
* Pearse Buckley, Sustainable Energy Ireland
* Nuala Ní Fhlatharta, Teagasc
* Diarmuid McAree, Forest Service, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
* Dympna Furlong, Forest Service, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

Minister of State Wallace said “The forestry sector makes a substantial contribution to economic, social and environmental policy in Ireland. Given the level of infrastructural development envisaged under the National Development Plan, and the need to deal with issues such as climate change and meeting renewable energy targets, this contribution is set to substantially increase over the coming decade. Key to achieving these policy goals is the need for investment in research and development, to put in place a dynamic, competitive and environmentally sustainable forestry sector in Ireland. COFORD plays a significant role in forest research and I am sure that its new members, drawn from the various elements within the sector, will continue and develop this role”.

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# New COFORD Connects notes

The latest set of COFORD Connects practical information notes has been published and issued free-of-charge to subscribers.

* Guidelines for designing a wood pellet storage facility.
* Estimated woodflow or the Republic of Ireland for 2006.
* Roundwood supply, wood energy and related issues in the UNECE region.
* Cladding.
* An overview of the Irish wood-based biomass sector.
* Gasifier-type firewood fuelled boilers.

COFORD Connects combines the latest research findings with practical advice in a easily readable format. Copies of the notes, including the full catalogue and folder, can be ordered though admin@coford.ie, and are also available at [www.coford.ie](http://www.coford.ie).

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# National Forestry Conference

COFORD, the Society of Irish Foresters and the Irish Timber Growers’ Association are hosting the National Forestry Conference, taking place on Friday 7 March 2008 at the Johnstown House Hotel, Enfield, Co Meath.

The theme for this year’s conference is: ***New forestry initiatives – opportunities for the sector***. It will be opened by the COFORD Chairman Michael Lynn (Woodfab) and will feature the following presentations:

* Keynote address: *Positioning the forestry sector to maximise its potential* – Prof. Gerry Boyle, Teagasc Director
* *Optimising returns from private forests – the thinning challenge* – Henry Phillips, Forestry consultant
* *Private timber sales – information and security initiatives* – Donal Whelan, ITGA Technical Director
* *Wood biomass – from forest to market* – Tom Kent, Waterford Institute of Technology
* *New grant schemes – new opportunities* – Seamus Dunne, Forest Service

If you would like to reserve a place at the conference, please contact the Society of Irish Foresters – tel: 071 9164434, Email: info@societyofirishforesters.ie or sif@eircom.net. [***Click here to download registration form.***](http://www.coford.ie/iopen24/pub/pub/nfc2008.pdf)

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# Bioenergy 2008

Following on from the highly successful Bioenergy 2007 event, Teagasc, SEI and COFORD are organising Bioenergy 2008, on the 20 June 2008 at the Teagasc Mellows Centre, Athenry. The day will feature outdoor wood energy exhibitions, as well as many trade and information stands. Bioenergy 2008 will be held in association with Teagasc’s national farming and rural development event, ***FarmFest.*** If you are interested in reserving exhibition space, please contact Paul Dykes, SEI – tel: 023 63393 or 087 9978723.

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# Joint COFORD/Teagasc/Forest Service Field Day

Th event will take place at Crookedwood, Co Westmeath on Wednesday 9 April, as part of the continuing Growing Quality Broadleaves programme, with the specific theme on the day being the ***Critical time for thinning, tending and respacing of young ash plantations.*** The day will begin with discussion on the best time for first thinning of ash, and important issues to be considered. It will be followed by a practical demonstration of first thinning, involving a number of plots which have been laid down at the site. Selection of ash for first thinning with identification of potential crop trees and subsequent marking of competitors to be removed wll be demonstrated and the session will conclude with a visit to a plot which has just been thinned.

Those wishing to attend should assemble at Ringtown GAA Club, Whitehall, Castlepollard, Co Westmeath, from 11:00 am to 12.30 pm (there will be a number of group departures from the GAA hall). Ringtown GAA club is in Whitehall, Co. Westmeath, which is 15 km from Mullingar and 7 km from Castlepollard along the R394. Ringtown GAA Club is on the left when travelling from Mullingar. Please watch out for Teagasc signage as you approach the Whitehall GAA hall. *(Because of parking limitations at the site access to the demonstrations is from the bus departing the hall only).*

For further details contact Teagasc staff Liam Kelly at 044 9340721, email: liam.kelly@teagasc.ie; or Kevin O’Connell at 049 4338300, email: kevin.oconnell@teagasc.ie

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# COFORD R&D programme: project update

## BROADFORM – Silviculture of new broadleaved plantations: shaping and thinning

*Each issue of COFORD Connects will in future carry a short article on new and ongoing COFORD-funded projects. Feedback on the articles is welcome and should be addressed to the project leaders, whose contact details will be appended to each article.*

During the last decade there has been an increased emphasis on broadleaf afforestation. The recent forest inventory (Government of Ireland 2007) indicates that currently the forest estate includes 150,000 ha of broadleaves as either pure crops or in mixture with coniferous species. Approximately 25,000 ha of broadleaves have been planted within the last decade. The BROADFORM project was initiated in January 2003 with the main aims to provide silvicultural guidelines for the early management of broadleaves, with the ultimate objective of producing a high quality timber crop. Investment in any early management has a long payback period. However, these operations are essential as they enhance the quality of the young crop and lay the foundations for a quality final crop. Shaping protocols for oak, ash, beech and sycamore have already been produced by the project. A thinning intensity trial in ash illustrated that, on some sites, there can be no difference in canopy density three years after a 50% thinning regime relative to a no-thin regime and that mean annual DBH increment over the period was 50% greater after thinning. Subsequently a draft thinning protocol for ash has also been produced. A series of Teagasc/COFORD demonstrations will be held during 2008 illustrating the thinning of broadleaves.

For further information contact Dr Ian Short (ian.short@teagasc.ie) and Toddy Radford, Teagasc Forestry Development Unit.

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# COFORD Technical workshop:

## Developing cost-effective systems for wood procurement, harvesting and transport

On 22 February, COFORD hosted a technical workshop to discuss the potentials of developing cost-effective systems for wood procurement, harvesting and transport. The presentations are available to download from the COFORD website:

* *Applications and development of real-time GPS tracking systems and on-board load sensor technology for wood transport in Ireland* - Dr Gerard Devlin (UCD)
* *Developments in small-scale harvesting technologies in Scandinavia, with particular relevance to Ireland* - Pieter D. Kofman (Danish Forestry Extension)
* *Value maximisation in harvesting – results of the OPTIVAL project* – Prof. Maarten Nieuwenhuis (UCD)
* *IT developments in tracking Coillte's timber movements* - John Lyons (Coillte)
* *Potential IT developments for wood sale from private forests* - Donal Whelan (ITGA)

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# Carbon Corner

## Challenging targets

Over a year ago the EU committed to making a unilateral 20% reduction in greenhouse emissions on 1990 levels by 2020, and to make a further 10% reduction if there was an international agreement to follow the Kyoto protocol. Agreement was reached at Bali on the agenda for the international negotiations, with a view to have the package finalised by the end of 2010.

Meanwhile, Ireland’s greenhouse gas emission reduction target under the new EU burden sharing arrangement is currently under negotiation. Whatever the outcome, the target will be extremely challenging for all sectors, including agriculture. Reducing emissions in the sector will prove to be difficult, however, given the resurgence in commodity prices and the current intensification in land use. But there are solutions to hand, particularly if land use is treated as a whole, and the target for the sector is based on both emissions and sinks.

Currently, land use is included at the national accounting level in two separate places: as emissions from agriculture as part of the overall basket of greenhouse gases (Annex A of the protocol) and, separately and with separate rules, under Articles 3.3 and 3.4 of the protocol. Moves are afoot to change this arrangement, at a technical level at least, and are reflected in the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for Agriculture and other Land Uses (AFOLU). Any move to simplify the current overly complicated treatment of land use is to be welcomed.

At the national level closer integration in the land use sphere should enable a clearer focus on where net emissions can be effected. For example, REPS offers huge scope for increased levels of afforestation and trees on the farm, measures that will have a triple effect: reduction in livestock emissions, removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere in biomass and soils, and the provision of a long term sustainable energy resource at farm, local and regional levels.

Getting the scale and structure of new grant support measures right presents new challenges and opportunities for both research providers and policy makers. Other opportunities for emission reductions exist at the farm level, including the use of wood chip outwintering pads, in the context of a whole farm approach to emission reductions. These approaches merit further research and investigation, as measures to address the 2020 target will need to be put in place from 2012 onwards.

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# Environ 2008 conference - COFORD student competition winners

Congratulations to winners Howard Fox, TCD, and Rebecca Martin, UCC, on being awarded COFORD-sponsored prizes for the best student oral presentation on a forestry theme (HF) *Epiphyte diversity in native and plantation forests*,and for the best student forestry poster (RM) *Assessing the biodiversity of canopy*. Both Howard and Rebecca are studying for PhDs in the FORESTBIO project. Copies of the presentations will be available shortly at the COFORD website.

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# Research Networks in Europe

Face-to-face contact is still very important in developing research contacts with a view to joining a European project. The amount of time allocated to personal interaction becomes very important. Conference delegates and meeting participants alike are encouraged to network formally and socially through forum discussions, brainstorming sessions, workshops, networking receptions and dinners. InnovaWood offer some tips for networking and present information on different networks relevant to the forest-based sector. [Click here for the pdf](http://www.coford.ie/iopen24/pub/pub/iwmarch08.pdf) (166 kb).

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# Defining High Conservation Value Forests (HCVF) in Ireland

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification standard requires the identification and management of attributes of High Conservation Value (HCV). These are outlined in generic terms, but need to be interpreted in a given national context. Ireland has yet to develop a widely accepted interpretation of what constitutes High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF). The purpose of developing an interpretation is to ensure that sites meeting the FSC definitions of HCVF can be consistently identified and managed.

To initiate this process, a workshop was held on 7 January in Co Wicklow to discuss the HCV definitions. The workshop was facilitated by ProForest Ltd (UK) whose team included Anders Lindhe, who developed much of the HCVF process for the FSC. Technical experts from a wide range of organisations, from statutory bodies to NGOs participated. The aim of the workshop was to produce an initial set of definitions that can be carried forward by further expert consultation and the Irish Forest Certification Initiative. Emphasis throughout was on the FSC’s description of HCVs as exceptional or critical ecological attributes, ecosystem services and social functions, as well as the significance of potential or actual threat. Note was also made of the current UKWAS standard applicable to both Britain and Northern Ireland.

Only two of the six HCV values were found to be present in Ireland’s forest areas. These were HCV1 (concentrations of biodiversity values) and HCV3 (threatened or endangered ecosystems). However, the locations and extent of these HCV areas were thought to be fairly limited. This is due to the semi-natural state of most woodland areas, their small and highly fragmented nature, and the fact that many woodlands were established (planted) relatively recently.

In addition to a wider agreement on these conclusions, work must now be carried out to refine what elements of the identified HCVs genuinely fall into this category, for example the information that is available concerning the extent and distribution of red list species.

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# The Manch Project - Irish Natural Forestry Foundation announces open days for 2008

The Irish Natural Forestry Foundation demonstration site at Manch near Ballineen in west Cork is an estate with 40 ha of old woodland, and approximately 20 ha of new woodland developed under the Forest Service Native Woodland Scheme. The Manch Project is a registered charity established in September 2002 to promote research and demonstrate environmentally sustainable forestry in Ireland. It is also an important learning centre for the young, with primary school and secondary school programmes on offer since March 2007 when the centre opened its formal forestry education programme for schools.

The Manch Project has recently announced the schedule open days to the public for 2008, which are on the first Sunday of each month from March through to November. On each of those days the site is open from 11am to 6 pm, giving people a chance to explore this woodland site, with over 15 km of footpaths, ample parking and information available on the work of the INFF.

A guided walk leaves the Education Centre at 2 pm on each open day, and a full calendar of family activities running on open days is listed on its web site. Admission is free and children are welcome.

For further information please see the Irish Natural Forestry Foundation web site at: [www.inff.ie](http://www.inff.ie/).

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# MORE – a project employing technology to enhance mitigation management in the forest industry

MORE is a research project that aims to employ technology in order to enhance mitigation management in the forestry industry, in addition to providing a more cost effective, proactive management service. This project is currently being undertaken by the TSSG group (part of Waterford Institute of Technology) along with seven other European partners from France, Spain, Germany and Hungary from both academic and industrial establishments.

One of the main objectives is to provide effective remote monitoring, for example, the critical temperature values of a wooded area are transferred wirelessly from off-the-shelf temperature monitors to the necessary forestry personnel. This remote monitoring can have a number of advantages:

• It could reduce the number of visits a worker would need to make to the area to physically collect data which in turns gives the workers the necessary time to devote to other problems.

• Continuous data can also be transferred to a central application which in turn can perform specific analysis on the data. The incoming data can be compared with thresholds set by the forestry personnel and negative trends detected. If this occurs a message can be sent to specified personnel to report the problem. This is pro-active management.

Another objective of the project is to add group communication to the framework/platform. Within the forestry domain, the ‘group’ concept has continually been of great importance. One individual or service, in the majority of cases will not solve most problems that occur. It is always a combination of individuals and services which come together to solve problem scenarios. As more services evolve the management of this group concept increases in magnitude.

What MORE is attempting to provide is the ability to build the necessary groups for both mitigating and managing environmental damage (e.g. critical value transgression for forest system stability (storm, biological stability), water quality, soil functionality information must be transferred from automatic monitoring facilities (e.g. EU Level-I/II plots) to a heterogeneous group of (a) affected land owners and (b) persons in charge at different administration, research, and management organisations.

• A predefined group which aids in the continuous monitoring of a specified area. This group could consist of the land-owner, researcher, planner, Decision maker, Central forestry Application, and whoever else is necessary.

• A dynamic group which can be triggered by specific events with comes together to address a specific emergency. Potential members of this could be: researcher, planner, Decision maker, or Emergency services.

MORE provides the ability to control the configuration and behaviour (e.g. what messages are sent to which members) of the group. In technology terms MORE is a ‘middleware’ platform. What is middleware? Middleware is a piece of software that connects two or more software applications so that they can exchange data. The MORE middleware targets the Embedded Systems domain; embedded systems being software which resides within a device and is part of a larger system. Embedded systems normally have many constraints due to their size, e.g. memory and processing power.

The complexity of the forestry domain, the heterogeneity of devices used and in turn the different communication mediums which these devices utilize is something MORE will attempt to overcome. The necessary individuals and services can be networked together irrespective of whether they use a PDA, mobile phone, smart phone or laptop through the MORE middleware.

Further information available at http://www.ist-more.org/

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# Oak imports restricted in UK from March 2008

Following the discovery of oak processionary moth (*Thaumetopoea processionea*) in parts of London in 2006, the Forestry Commission has been working to try to eradicate it with the London Borough Councils affected by this serious defoliator of many oak species. More than 700 nests were found and destroyed during 2007, and the programme is again being mobilised this spring to try to eradicate any that survived last year's action. There is strong evidence that semi-mature, fastigiate oaks used for landscaping were the pathway by which the moth gained entry to Britain.

Oak processionary moth also poses a human health hazard, because the hairs of its larvae (caterpillars) contain a toxin that can cause severe irritations of the skin, eyes, nose, throat and ears of people and animals that come into contact with them.

Emergency measures to protect Great Britain against further introductions of the moth are likely to come into force in early (March), the Forestry Commission advises. The Commission has asked the European Commission to draft measures to protect against further introductions, and this is likely to result in the designation of Great Britain, at least, as a ‘protected zone’. However, because it is likely to be some time before the new EU measures are adopted, the Forestry Ministers agreed that immediate emergency measures should be put in place as quickly as possible to prevent further infested oak trees entering Great Britain.

As a result, an amendment to the Plant Health (Forestry) Order 2005 will come into effect in March. This will require that all oak trees imported from EU Member States, regardless of whether they are prepared and ready for sale to the final consumer, are accompanied by a plant passport confirming that the trees have been nursery grown and that they come from an area where the place of production and its immediate vicinity are free from oak processionary moth.

Roddie Burgess, head of Plant Health at the Forestry Commission, said, *We are therefore advising potential purchasers from now on to stipulate in their orders placed with suppliers in any other EU Member State that all oak trees must meet this requirement. Particularly affected will be orders placed with suppliers based in The Netherlands, France and Italy. Orders placed with suppliers outside the EU will not be affected, because the moth has not been found outside the EU*.

Further information about oak processionary moth and the action being taken can be found at [www.forestry.gov.uk/planthealth](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/planthealth) or contact Charlton Clark at Tel: 00 44 1314 6500.

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# Systems analysis as applied to forest policy and management issues

A research training workshop, ENGREF, will take place at Nancy, France, 19-21 June 2008. This workshop is designed to provide an introduction to the important concepts in systems analysis and its application to forest policy and management issues. The workshop is particularly for young researchers, managers and policy makers, including postgraduate students, who have had limited exposure to policy research, systems thinking and modelling methods. However, it will also be useful for established researchers, including those who may administer rather than conduct projects.

The training workshop will be run in conjunction with the Small-scale Rural Forest Use and Management: Global Policies versus Local Knowledge International Symposium at Gérardmer, France, 23-27 June 2008, organised under the auspices of IUFRO 3.08 Small-scale Forestry. The conference website is http://www.uq.edu.au/forestry/index.html. The training workshop follows on from a highly successful systems training workshop held in conjunction with the IUFRO 3.08 conference held in Ormoc, Philippines in June 2007.

For more information contact Dr John Herbohn (j.herbohn@uq.edu.au).

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# FTPC5: The 5th Forest-Based Sector Technology Platform Conference

In a time of globalisation and societal change, the European forest-based sector needs to be innovative. This requires emphasis on research and development and strong links between science and business. The 5th conference of the Forest-Based Sector Technology Platform (FTP) will discuss the meaning of research and innovation to forest-based business, with the theme *Growing towards the Future - Joint innovation for successful forest-based business in Europe.* The event takes place on 19-21 May 2008 at Kranjska Gora, Slovenia, and will present success stories of how research and innovation are implemented in the daily business practice. The 5th FTP conference will offer an excellent networking opportunity to those working in Europe’s forest-based business. One of the focal points of the conference is the forest-based sector in Southern and South-Eastern Europe. For further information, see www.ftpc5.si

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# Erratum

In the COFORD Connects note 'National Pine Marten Survey of Ireland 2005', (Environment No. 7), the first line of the last paragraph of the Introduction section, page 2, currently reads: *During 2005, a repeat survey of 55 of the original 97 x 10 km2 squares was undertaken.......*  It should read: *During 2005, a repeat survey of 55 of the original 428 x 10 km2 squares was undertaken........*

Apologies for any inconvenience.

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