Forestry and Wood Update

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COFORD

Agriculture Building, Belfield, Dublin 4, Ireland.

Tel: (01) 7167700

Fax: (01) 7161180

Email: info@coford.ie

Web: [www.coford.ie](http://www.coford.ie)

# COFORD WORKSHOP: Preparation and Sale of Hardwoods

During 2002 and 2003, COFORD organised a series of two-day seminars on the management of broadleaves to produce quality hardwood timber. At these events, a major shortcoming was identified in the area of availability and quantification of supply of hardwood material between growers and users of hardwood logs. To address this issue, COFORD undertook to co-ordinate the development of a system where growers with hardwoods for sale would list available material in a standardised format. This list would be published periodically and circulated nationally as a sales catalogue, and is soon to commence on a trial basis.

To further this objective, COFORD has organised a hands-on workshop on the quantification and categorisation of standing hardwoods and the felling and jointing of felled material in preparation for such a sale. The first of these one-day workshops is scheduled to take place in Dundrum, Co Tipperary, on Tuesday 16 September 2003.

The main speaker will be Gavin Munro, a Scottish forester who has specialised in the purchase, processing and sale of hardwoods in the international market since 1975. He has been a member of the Scottish Hardwood Marketing Development Group since its establishment and is currently working as a hardwood timber buyer with T & G Norman in Carlisle.

This event is aimed at owners and managers of broadleaved woodland as well as consultant foresters and all those working on the management of broadleaved trees.

The event is recognised under the Society of Irish Foresters Programme of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and participation is equivalent to 10 points for SIF members.

The programme for the day will be:

#### INDOOR SESSION at the Dundrum House Hotel

09:00 Registration

09:30 Opening address by Mr David Nevins (Chairman, COFORD)

09:45 Introduction by Dr Eugene Hendrick (Director, COFORD)

10:00 The processing and presentation of Irish hardwoods by Seamus Heaney (Coillte)

10:30 Hardwood timber sales by Gavin Munro (T&G Norman)

1. Preparation and presentation of woodlots

2. Valuing and grading of hardwoods

*OUTDOOR SESSION at Gortusa Property, Dundrum (Coillte)*

13:00 Sourcing Irish hardwoods by Pat Buckley (Coillte)

13:30 Measuring, grading and valuing hardwood timber at the roadside by Gavin Munro (T&G Norman)

14:30 Grading and valuing standing trees by Gavin Munro (T&G Norman)

15:30 Question and answer session

16:00 Close of proceedings by Joe O’Carroll (Operations Manager, COFORD)

Attendance at the workshop (including refreshments and lunch) is subject to a registration fee of €50 per person. It is advisable to book early as places are limited and will be allocated on a first come basis. Download the registration form at [www.coford.ie/HardwoodSales.pdf](http://www.coford.ie/HardwoodSales.pdf). Contact COFORD for further information – tel: 01 716 7700 or email info@coford.ie

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# Irish Forest Industry ChainBreakfast Seminar

Public Private Partnership in Forestry - Positioning For Success

The Irish Forest Industry Chain (IFIC) will be holding its September Breakfast Seminar on Wednesday, 10 September 2003. The event will take place at the Alexander Hotel, Merrion Square, Dublin 2, from 7.30 a.m. – 10 a.m.

Dr John Bowman will chair the meeting, and guest speakers are:

* Dr Jouni Shoheimo, Secretary General, Finnish National Forest Programme and Senior Adviser of the Department of Forestry / Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland.
* Mr Joe Kennedy, General Manager, Weyerhaeuser Europe Limited
* Prof. John Fitz Gerald, Research Professor, Economic and Social Research Institute

The deadline for bookings is Tuesday, 9 September 2003, and the cost is €100. Registration forms have been distributed with this newsletter. If you wish to attend this seminar, or require further information, contact Elva Duggan at the Irish Forest Industry Chain, email: Elva.Duggan@ibec.ie

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# Carbon Corner

## Good reasons why afforestation and forest products are good news for climate change

Climate change issues and forests often revolve around carbon sequestration, and deforestation – the good and the bad news as far as concentrations of greenhouse gases are concerned. Without doubt forests are both major stores and sources of greenhouse gases, especially CO2. About 46% (1146 G[[1]](#footnote-1) t C) of the total terrestrial carbon stock is held in forest ecosystems, mostly in the soils that support tree growth, while emissions of greenhouse gases from deforestation, particularly in the tropics, are significant in global warming terms (about 1.6 G t C/annum).

Nevertheless, as readers of carbon corner will be aware, there are many other sides to the carbon story as far as forests and forestry are concerned. This column has many times referred to the cobenefits or coproducts that arise from an afforestation programme. Principally these involve the use of wood products as replacements for greenhouse gas emitting fossil fuels and as timber and panel products used mainly in construction.

So, apart from carbon sequestration in the forest ecosystem, what are these other benefits?

## Wood energy

As far as wood for energy is concerned, Carbon Corner remains convinced that it will continue to be one of the principal uses for wood not only in developing countries (where often it is the only fuel available) but increasingly in the developed world. Some may regard the United States as ambivalent about climate change issues but there too there is an increasing focus on wood energy, and not just for small domestic heating applications. Many states and utilities are becoming more and more interested in wood energy and the benefits that it can bring - not just in reducing harmful greenhouse gas emissions, but in reducing the level of other pollutants such as sulphur dioxide. As an example, Public Service Company of New Hampshire, the state’s largest electrical energy company, last week asked its Public Utilities Commission for permission to replace a 50 MW coal-fired boiler with a more efficient wood-fuelled generator at its Schiller Station in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The project aims to produce enough electricity to power about 50,000 homes by 2005. Interestingly, the company has said that one of its primary aims is to open up a new market for low-grade wood (including residues) in the state.

## Energy efficiency

Timber frame homes are warm homes – a fact well appreciated by those who own and live in them. Heating bills are lower in well-insulated houses, and consequently oil and gas bills are reduced. Such savings translate directly into reduced use of fossil fuels and of course fewer emissions of greenhouse gases. Better energy performance in buildings is one of the areas highlighted in the government’s National Climate Change Strategy. A target saving of 0.25 M t CO2/annum is foreseen as a result of the implementation of tighter building regulations (mainly for new buildings) that will reduce energy losses. But there is much scope for further reductions – residential buildings account for 30% of national CO2 emissions (see the COFORD Connects note – [*Energy Efficiency of Timber Frame Housing*](http://www.coford.ie/bookshop/Timber_Housing.pdf) - for more information on this topic).

## Carbon storage in products

Wood-based products are, of course, carbon stores, and while many products such as paper and some panel boards are short-lived, others such as structural timbers can have lifetimes of hundreds of years. The current assumption in calculating emissions from harvested wood products is that the store of global forest products is constant, that there is no net increase. There is evidence, however, that in some countries wood product carbon stores are increasing over time. While attempts have been made in the past to develop approaches to deal with harvested wood products under the Kyoto Protocol, no agreed mechanism has emerged.

## Reduced emissions in production

It is not only in their use that wood-based products are energy efficient. Far less energy is used in the conversion and production of timber and panel products from round logs than in the case of steel, concrete or aluminium.

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# BIHIP Field Day and AGM

The 12th Annual General Meeting and field day of the British and Irish Hardwood Improvement Programme (BIHIP) is taking a different form this year, as it is entirely field based. It will take place in the Forest of Dean in Gloucestershire on Tuesday 7 October 2003. The hosts for the day will be Rob Guest, Deputy Surveyor of the Forest of Dean, and John Davis, Woodland Improvement and Conservation.

The programme will include a number of stops at which the seven BIHIP species groups – Oak; Ash; Sycamore; Birch; Walnut; Cherry and Spanish Chestnut – will display their separate plans, demonstrate current progress and discuss future ideas. This will take the form of visits to a number of sites in the Forest of Dean, chosen to illustrate aspects relevant to the work of the BIHIP species groups. The day will present an opportunity for those interested in progressing the sustainable future of broadleaved forestry in Britain and Ireland to work together towards their shared goals.

For further information on any aspect of BIHIP’s work contact John Fennessy at COFORD (email: john.fennessy@coford.ie) or visit <http://www.bihip.com/>

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# Birch – Selection and improvement of Irish birch

Broadleaves now constitute an expanding area of the Irish forest estate and this area is likely to increase further as a result of schemes such as the Native Woodland Scheme. While there is a general requirement for native broadleaves, only a small number of native broadleaf trees have commercial timber production potential. *Betula pendula* (silver birch) and *Betula pubescence* (common birch) have been identified as potential commercial species. A previous COFORD-funded project, undertaken by Dr Niamh O’Dowd, consisted of a pilot study of the potential improvement of Irish birch through a national selection programme of superior trees. Following the work of Dr O’Dowd, field trials were established testing progeny of the selected trees using specific crosses. To date, field trials have been established on three sites in Spring 2001. The sites are at

* Castletown, Co Tipperary on a grey brown podzolic soil,
* Carlow on an acid brown earth mineral soil and
* at Boora Bog in Co Offaly on a cutover industrial peat site.

The objectives of the programme are:

* To monitor the performance of selected plus trees and their progeny.
* Identify superior stands of Irish birch for selection and registration as future seed sources.
* Continue the identification, selection and testing of best Irish birch.

Preliminary results indicate that performance in terms of height and diameter increment is best at the Tipperary site, which is moderately exposed.

For further information about this project, please contact John Fennessy at COFORD (email: john.fennessy@coford.ie)

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# BOGFOR Field Day

The Society of Irish Forests is hosting a field day on Friday, 5 September, starting at 10.30 a.m. This field day revolves around the afforestation of Bord na Móna industrial cutaway peatlands and primary results of the BOGFOR research programme. It will take place at the Blackwater Bord na Móna Works, Shannonbridge, Co Offaly. The programme is:

10.30 am Introduction - tea/coffee

11.00 am Train trip on the Clonmacnoise and West Offaly Railway that will give an insight into the development and the utilisation of Ireland’s raised bogs. The options for utilisation of the cutover peatlands will be outlined, while the properties of peat in relation to these options (but particularly forestry) will be explained.

Leaders: Gerry McNally (Land Development Manager, Bord na Móna)

 Tom Egan (Land Projects Manager, Bord na Móna)

12.30 pm Lunch - please bring flask and packed lunch

2.00 pm Board the train to visit one of the BOGFOR experimental sites. The BOGFOR Research Programme is now in its fifth year. Just over 200 ha of cutaway peatlands have been planted in order to find the best tree species and most appropriate establishment techniques for these new site types, which will be able for afforestation in the near future. The first stop will provide an opportunity to assess various species (both broadleaves and coniferous) that have been planted in 2000, on various remaining peat depths. The second stop will be in a Norway spruce demonstration area where silvicultural treatments are being tested. The effect of cultivation, fertilisation regime and vegetation control as well as the impact of drainage, compaction, wind exposure, and especially peat depth on tree growth will be presented.

Leaders: Prof. Ted Farrell (Project Leader, BOGFOR)

Florence Renou (Project Manager, BOGFOR)

4.30 pm End of day trip

For further information, please contact the Society of Irish Foresters at (tel) 071-64434, or email: sif@eircom.net.

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# Forest Engineering Group: September Symposium

The UK Forest Engineering Group will be holding its September Symposium at Newton Rigg College, Cumbria, on Tuesday 2 September 2003. The programme includes the following presentations:

Session 1: **Selling by weight– Is someone losing out?** Chairman – John Kissock, James Jones & Sons

* *Log measurement and payment methods* - Ashley Williams, Euroforest
* *FC - scanning – weight/volume – payments -* Mike Green, Forestry Commission
* *Measurement of timber – conversion factors and payment method* - Markku Halinen, UPM
* *Optimising log value by forest assessment and controlled distribution* - Jason Hubert, Forestry Research

Session 2: **Road transportation developments.** Chairman – David Sulman, UKFPA

* *Vehicle developments, strategic routes and other public issues* - Bill Barker, Dumfries & Galloway Council
* *Life cycle analysis* - Jo Munday, BRE
* *Timber transport in Sutherland and road construction over peat* - Ron Munro, Highland Council
* *Topical issues regarding forest roads and vehicles* - David Killer, Forestry Civil Engineering

For further information, contact Bruce Hamilton, FEG Co-ordinator, Forestry Civil Engineering, Greenside, Peebles, EH45 8JA. Email: Bruce.hamilton@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

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# Heritage Week

The Geological Survey of Ireland will take part in Heritage Week this year. Events will start this Sunday, 7 September, and run until the next Sunday. A booklet from Dúchas advertising all the events across the country for the week is available. Some of the events planned are:

7/09/2003: A tour of the Kilfarrasy and Bunhamon volcanoes, plus ancillary features along the Copper Coast, European Geopark. Kilfarrasy, Fenor, Co Waterford.

7/09/2003: Guided tour of geology and nature. Bray Head, Co Wicklow.

08-12/09/2003: What on Earth? A new exhibition giving a visual exploration of geology is about and what geologists do. Exhibition area, Geological Survey of Ireland, Beggars Bush, Haddington Road, Dublin 4.

09/09/2003: Short guided walk around the rocks of an ancient volcano (including rough terrain and stepping stones). Lough Nafooey, Co Mayo.

14/09/2003: Wicklow way: a walk on the wild side. An exploration of the landscape and rocks of the Wicklow way at Lough Tay, Co Wicklow.

14/09/2003: Walk in the Carlingford Volcanic Centre. The rocks of the Cooley Peninsula represent the eroded roots of an ancient volcano that erupted 60 million years ago. Carlingford, Co Louth.

14/09/2003: A gentle stroll into the past via the pebbles and rocks at Killiney beach: how geological processes have shaped the landscape. Killiney Beach, Co Dublin.

For further details, visit www.gsi.ie or contact Sophie Preteseille at Sophie.Preteseille@gsi.ie or telephone 01 678 2873.

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# Fire and Pestilence

*Source: The Economist, 9 August 2003, p42.*

This is a summer of biblical harshness for the forests of British Columbia. A vast and still-growing expanse of woodland has turned into a rust-red wasteland of dead trees, ravaged by pine beetles. And over the past fortnight, raging wildfires have charred large tracts of south-central British Columbia, forcing 10,000 people to flee near Kamloops, gutting some 80 homes and a sawmill.

In this double blow, the heavier has been dealt by the pine beetle. In North America’s worst-ever forest infestation, the beetles have attacked 9 m hectares (22 m acres) of lodgepole pine in a huge apostrophe-shaped area 1,100 km long and 450 km wide, around Prince George. The timber affected is enough to build 3.3 m homes, or to supply the entire American housing market for two years. In the next few weeks, billions of tiny beetles will emerge from the dead trunks and fly off in search of new trees to kill. Since the infestation took off five years ago, the damage has doubled annually, and is likely to do so again this year, according to Allan Carroll of the Canadian Forest Service.

Such outbreaks are not unusual. Why is this one so severe? Ironically, forest fires normally keep insects at bay. More effective fire control has led to an increase in the number of the mature trees the beetles prefer. In the past, cold winters, in which the temperature plunged below minus 40oC, killed off up to 80% of the beetle larvae. But British Columbia has not seen such winters for many years.

Unfortunately, this summer’s fires, triggered by lightning and perhaps careless smokers after a hot, dry summer, are unlikely to help as they are in the wrong place. The worry now is that the beetles have reached Alberta, threatening the boreal forests there.

Some forest scientists blame the provincial government for letting the beetles get out of control. Its forest ministry first detected a small colony in a provincial park in 1994, but failed to eliminate them. Now forest-friendly methods such as beetle-trapping, selective logging and controlled fires have little effect. All the foresters can do is pray for very cold winters – and allow logging of infested tracts to slow the plague’s advance.

This clearcutting worries greens, but is a lifeline for logging firms. They are struggling under hefty anti-dumping duties imposed by the United States in 2000 in a protracted trade dispute. “Salvation logging” of dead trees carries a discounted stumpage (cutting) fee. That has helped British Columbia’s timber firms to maintain their American sales despite the punitive duties. The pesky beetles have a silver lining of sorts.

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This newsletter was compiled and edited by
Lauren MacLennan,
Technology Transfer Co-ordinator, COFORD
Email: lauren.maclennan@coford.ie

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1. G= Giga = I billion [↑](#footnote-ref-1)