|  |
| --- |
| **A: what are the main issues affecting the availability of land for afforestation** |
| **1: NPWS:** Primarily relating to hen harrier and lands adjoining NHA’s. Potential forestry ground is being refused as forestry may effect water tables in an NHA, even though there might be a 3m drain running along between NHA and proposed forestry land? **2: Acid Sensitive water testing:** Two map numbers in Offaly have been marked for water Testing. Water is generally derived from limestone bedrock in these areas. I have tested a number of streams in these map numbers and it is rare to find a reading below 100mg CaCO never mind below 15mg.**3: E.I.A:** Assessments been requested whereby there is more that 5o ha of forestry approved in an adjoining area. Surely it should be greater than 50 ha planted or funded for planting. County Councils requesting EIA for a potential risk to water quality, not viable for an individual to carry out an EIA to their standard.**4: Farming enterprises:** Competition from other farming enterprises.  |
| **B what are the main constraints to achieving afforestation goals.** |
| **1: Premium security:** Failure to guarantee premium rate for 20 years.**2:** **Government Funding:** Funding being allocated on a yearly basis leading to a stop/start situation.3**: Single farm payment**: Lack of clarity has led to confusion with respect to planting of forestry.**3: Forest Service:** Particularly in the form 2 section. Changing the rules without any consultation with the industry. Tax clearance certificates for both individuals in a JMC, level of detail now required to show proof of ownership. |
| **C What incentives would support the achievement of these goals** |
| 1. **Guarantee premium:** The premiums are as good as guaranteed, why not come out and guarantee rate and duration.
2. **Funding:** Ring fence funding; give confidence to the landowner that forestry is here to stay.
3. **Premium qualification:** Amend premium qualification to include individuals who are going to actively farm or for individuals/families who have been in procession of the land for a number of years.
4. **Re-planting requirement:** Amend this clause in the felling act, in the majority of cases the land will be re-planted. Perhaps allow individuals to offset some of the re-planting cost or offer a small grant.
5. **Agriculture Schemes:** Allow farmers to retain their disadvantage area payment, clarify the position with respect to SFP and Forestry, forestry to be classified as any other agriculture crop.
6. **Appeals System:** Independent appeals system where forestry approval has been refused, particularly relating to individual inspector’s interpretation of rules, NPWS, an taisce and County Councils. Forest service to use external expertise where it is justified and landowner committed to going ahead in order to take on these external bodies.
 |