

Forestry and Wood Update

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**CONTENTS**

Information and support services 2

Preliminary 2010 roundwood harvest and wood product trade data for the Republic of Ireland. 2

Seed Stands 2010 4

Carbon Corner 5

Events 7

Small Scale Harvesting Demonstration 7

Workshop on health and safety and biomass fuels 14 June 2011 8

Woodenergy Workshop 15 June 2011 9

RASLRES 11

Research Programme 12

Birch improvement programme 12

STANDMODEL Project Update 12

QualiBroad 13

National and international news 14

Minister of State McEntee Opens National IFA Farm Forestry Conference 2011 14

Minister of State McEntee Opens Irish Forestry, Woodland and Bio Energy Show 2011 15

News from the Irish Forest, Woodland and Bioenergy Show 2011 15

Minister of State visits people and areas affected by the land and forest fires in Donegal 16

Minister of State meets Emergency Teams and says 'Thank You' to everyone involved in fighting Land and Forest Fires 16

The European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS) 17

The restoration programme of American chestnut 17

Technology Collaboration 19

Teagasc Forestry enters the Facebook and Twitter domain 19

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Newsletter compiled and edited by Orla Cashen, John Fennessy and Eugene Hendrick, Forest Sector Development Division, DAFF.

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# Information and support services

# Preliminary[[1]](#footnote-1) 2010 roundwood harvest and wood product trade data for the Republic of Ireland.

Indications are that the overall harvest in 2010 was over 2.7 million cubic metres of roundwood (overbark), an increase of 9% on 2009 levels. Harvest levels in the private sector in 2010 were more than three times the level in 2009, a reflection of the very strong stumpage prices prevailing in 2010. Demand was strong across all sectors, from forest-based biomass for energy, through to wood-based panels and sawn timber (Table 1).

Table 1: State and private sector roundwood harvest in the Republic of Ireland (2007-2010)[[2]](#footnote-2).

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | *2007* | *2008* | *2009* | *2010* |
| Source | 000 m3 (OB) | | | |
| Coillte | 2,556 | 2,279 | 2,354 | 2,261 |
| Private sector | 390 | 118 | 130 | 445 |
| TOTAL | 2,946 | 2,397 | 2,484 | 2,706 |

In value terms, exports of wood products grew by 18% in 2010 to reach €286 million (Table 2). Export volumes of wood-based panels and sawn timber rose by 14% and 10% in 2010, respectively.

Table 2: Wood product trade (2007-2010)[[3]](#footnote-3).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Product* | *Imports* | | | | | | | |
| *2007* | *2008* | *2009* | *2010* | *2007* | *2008* | *2009* | *2010* |
| *000 m3 UB* | | | | *€ million* | | | |
| *Sawn timber* | 724 | 412 | 232 | 242 | 251 | 141 | 66 | 74 |
| *Wood-based panels* | 358 | 264 | 181 | 166 | 146 | 108 | 68 | 65 |
| *Pulp* | *000 tonnes* | | | |  | | | |
| 31 | 29 | 32 | 41 | 22 | 20 | 22 | 31 |
| *Paper* | 546 | 526 | 379 | 370 | 467 | 520 | 308 | 313 |
| *TOTAL* | | | | | 886 | 789 | 464 | 483 |
|  | *Exports* | | | | | | | |
| *000 m3 UB* | | | | *€ million* | | | |
| *Sawn timber* | 381 | 389 | 564 | 621 | 71 | 54 | 51 | 63 |
| *Wood-based panels* | 757 | 614 | 580 | 660 | 262 | 195 | 147 | 179 |
|  | *000 tonnes* | | | |  | | | |
| *Pulp* | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| *Paper* | 85 | 77 | 45 | 33 | 92 | 69 | 45 | 44 |
| TOTAL | | | | | 425 | 318 | 243 | 286 |

Since 2007 the trend has been for Ireland to become of net exporter of sawn timber, due largely to the collapse of the domestic construction market and increased levels of exports to the UK. The value of wood-based panel exports (a net export category for some time) rose by over 40% in 2010 (Table 3).

Table 3: Balance of trade (negative numbers indicates net imports) in the value of forest products (2007-2010).

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Product* | *2007* | *2008* | *2009* | *2010* |
| *€ million* | | | |
| *Sawn timber* | -180 | -87 | -15 | -11 |
| *Wood-based panels* | 116 | 87 | 79 | 114 |
| *Pulp products* | -22 | -20 | -22 | -31 |
| *Paper products* | -375 | -451 | -263 | -269 |
| *TOTAL* | -461 | -471 | -221 | -197 |

It is anticipated that the full wood flow report for 2010 will be available from the end of July.

*Compiled by Eoin O’Driscoll (*[*eoin@drima.com*](mailto:eoin@drima.com)*) and Eugene Hendrick*

# Seed Stands 2010

Seed stands play a pivotal role in the development of future forests since they provide the reproductive material from which planting material is sourced and used to establish forests. Seed stand selection is an ongoing process; as mature stands are felled replacements are located, and if considered suitable, are registered in the National Catalogue of Seed Stands. In 2010, approximately 180 ha of seed stands were selected, registered and added to the catalogue. Selected seed stands are to be found across the entire forestry sector in Ireland and include the public sector (Coillte), the National Parks & Wildlife Service estate and a number of private forests.

We are actively seeking new stands to add to the catalogue. If you are the owner of a stand which you consider may have potential as a registered seed stand (at least 1 ha in extent and of superior productivity and quality) we would be delighted to hear from you. We are available to go on site and advise you accordingly, the service free and without obligation.

For further information contact John Fennessy at: [john.fennessy@agriculture.gov.ie](mailto:john.fennessy@agriculture.gov.ie) or phone 01-6072944.

# Carbon Corner

*Carbon construction*

The previous Carbon Corner included information on Ireland’s Forest Management Reference level and how it was established. In this edition, how wood harvested from Irish forests can contribute to climate change mitigation is explored in a more detail.

Wood harvested from Irish forests ends up in a range of sawnwood and panel products, as well as being used for heat and power energy generation. Both solid wood products and use of wood for energy contribute to climate change mitigation, with the largest impact coming from what is called cascade use of wood: from solid wood products through to energy capture at the end of product life.

The cost and efficiency of energy recovery at the end of product life depends on a number of factors, not least the use of chemical preservatives (which tend to result in wood having to be combusted in specially licensed incinerators), and the nature of adhesives and fixings used in board and other products. Hence, for domestic and most heat-only applications only untreated wood is suitable, which generally means pellets and woodchip sourced directly from the forest or as sawmilling residues.

Good data are available for Ireland (particularly over the past decade) on what type of products the domestic wood harvest ends up in. There are also good data on the level of domestic use versus exports. This information has allowed a profile of wood use going back over several decades to be built up. These so-called activity data can then be used with product service lives to paint a picture of the ebb and flow of wood products from domestic harvest into and out of the harvested wood products pool. Each year new products are manufactured and enter the pool, and each year products are lost as kitchens are replaced, fencing posts come to end of use, and so on.

From the climate change perspective it is important to increase the size of the wood products pool over time (for example by policies that encourage higher levels of energy performance in buildings linked to use of timber frame construction), to maintain products in the pool for long periods (for example by developing and implementing codes of practice and standards that promote durable and fit-for purpose wood products) and to continue to keep the pool topped up with products so the outflow does not exceed the inflow. The latter is critically important in relation to policy development. If a policy decision is made that favours increased use of wood products it is important that it is maintained over the long term, otherwise the large pool of wood carbon that is ‘out there’ will become an accounting liability as it is released back into the atmosphere.

Ireland’s building boom has resulted in very significant levels of carbon being stored in joists, roofs, kitchens, doors and floors, and in the case of timberframe, in wall panels and the like. Over time this carbon will be released back into the atmosphere (maybe sooner than expected in the case of ghost estates). This loss can be balanced by moving to a sustained and sustainable level of new building and renovation, and by a paradigm shift to support greatly increased levels of wood use in all aspects of construction.

Projections for the wood products pool in Ireland indicate that for the next three years the inflow will not balance outflow and it will therefore be a source of greenhouse gas emissions. After that time it is likely to return to being net store of carbon. But this depends on maintaining harvest levels and a balance of uses between energy and solid wood products. One thing is clear: in order for the forest sector to comprehensively address climate change mitigation wood use in the construction sector needs to greatly increase and a radical rethink and reshaping of building regulation and other policy approaches needs to take place.

# Events

# Small Scale Harvesting Demonstration

Knocknagoshel, Co Kerry

Thursday 9 June, 2011

Teagasc and the Forest Service are organising a national demonstration of Small Scale Harvesting and Extraction in Knocknagoshel, Co Kerry, on Thursday 9 June, 2011. This will be a great opportunity to acquire the know-how to thin in both conifer and broadleaf forests. It will also be of major interest to owners who have small woodlands which are at, or near, first thinning stage.

Live demonstrations on harvesting, extraction and wood energy options will be on view. The event will focus on harvesting and extraction using both readily available and specialised systems such as horse extraction, tractor and trailer forwarder, ATV, tracked dumper, mini forwarders and other methods. Contractors with such equipment will exhibit and demonstrate their machinery and services provided. Trade stands will also be present for those considering their thinning options.

The following will be demonstrated and discussed on the day:

* Growing trees for quality timber
* Timing and preparation for first thinning
* Chainsaw use, safety and maintenance
* Small scale harvesting, extraction and processing methods
* Thinning products (fencing posts, timber logs, firewood, chips, etc.)
* Possible work opportunities in timber harvesting

Venue details: Thursday 9 June 2011, Rubys (The Westering Inn), Fealebridge, Abbeyfeale (located on the old Castleisland to Abbeyfeale road, on the Kerry side of the Kerry/Limerick county bounds). Arrive any time between 11am and 12.30 pm. Please note that buses will depart from Rubys to the demonstration site every twenty minutes between 11am and 12.30pm and the demonstration will take approximately 2.5 hours. This is an outdoor event so please bring appropriate footwear and raingear. All are welcome; the event is free-of-charge.

Contact: Tom, Houlihan, Teagasc Forestry Development Officer, Teagasc Tralee at 066-7125077 or 087-6184353 or visit [www.teagasc.ie/forestry](http://www.teagasc.ie/forestry) for updates on this event.

# Workshop on health and safety and biomass fuels 14 June 2011

 W O R K S H O P

Tuesday 14 June 2011

Killeshin Hotel, Portlaoise

09:30 am - 12:30 pm

Presented by COFORD and woodenergy.ie

This workshop will be led by Pieter D. Kofman, wood energy consultant to COFORD. Like fossil fuels, biomass fuels have their safety and health risks, but if they are understood and handled correctly, then they are minimal.

The workshop will discuss:

* Spontaneous combustion
* Emissions of carbon monoxide
* Oxygen depletion
* Formation of fungi and bacteria spores

The workshop will present suggestions for dealing with these issues.

The workshop is limited to 20 participants so prior registration is essential. The registration fee is €50.00 per person which includes tea/coffee and handouts. Please complete the [registration form](http://www.coford.ie/media/coford/content/eventspresentations/events2011/woodenergyworkshops-healthandsafety14june2011portlaoise/Wood%20Energy%20Registration_Form.doc) and email to [orla.cashen@agriculture.gov.ie](mailto:orla.cashen@agriculture.gov.ie)

Payment details will be forwarded upon receipt of the registration form. When making a transfer or lodgement please include your name as a reference for identification.

The DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION AND PAYMENT is 8 June 2011 to ensure a place at the workshop. For all Registration queries please contact Orla Cashen 01 6072487, or email [orla.cashen@agriculture.gov.ie](mailto:orla.cashen@agriculture.gov.ie).

Woodenergy Workshop 15 June 2011

W O R K S H O P

Presented by COFORD and woodenergy.ie

**Units, standards and costings software for wood for energy**

Wednesday 15 June 2011

Killeshin Hotel, Portlaoise

09:30 am - 12:30 pm

This half-day workshop will provide guidelines and information on:

* Units, conversion factors and formulae for wood for energy. Make sense of units such as: m3 solid, m3 loose volume, tonnes, GJ, kWh, and understand the importance of moisture and energy content in determining price and return on investment.
* New CEN (European) standards for solid biofuels, particularly for non-industrial applications: wood chip, pellets, briquettes, firewood
* New software will be demonstrated and provided that will answer questions such as:
  + What will my annual cost be for an alternative (bio)fuel compared to my  present consumption of fossil fuel (coal, oil, electricity, peat).
  + How long a pay-back if I change to another fuel?
  + What are the costs of producing and delivering wood chips depending on tree species, basic density, moisture content at different stages of the production process, ash content, harvesting and chipping costs, transport distance, storage period etc.

Registration fee is €50.00 per person. This includes a copy of the costings software, tea/coffee and handouts.

The workshop is limited to 20 participants so prior registration is essential - contact Orla Cashen tel: 01 6072487, or email [orla.cashen@agriculture.gov.ie](mailto:orla.cashen@agriculture.gov.ie)

Payment details will be forwarded upon receipt of the [registration form](http://www.coford.ie/media/coford/content/eventspresentations/events2011/woodenergyworkshops-healthandsafety14june2011portlaoise/Wood%20Energy%20Registration_Form-1.doc). When making a transfer or lodgement please include your name as a reference for identification.

**DEADLINE FOR PAYMENT** Please note that there is a deadline of 8 June 2011 for registration and payment to ensure a place at the workshop. For all Registration queries please contact Orla Cashen 01 6072487, or email [orla.cashen@agriculture.gov.ie](mailto:orla.cashen@agriculture.gov.ie)

**National bioenergy conference**

##### BioEnergy 2011

## Conference and Site Visits

### Thursday 16 June 2011, EPA Headquarters, Johnstown Castle Estate, Co Wexford.

Presented jointly by Teagasc, Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland and COFORD/DAFF, the BioEnergy 2011 conference takes place on Thursday 16 June 2011 at the EPA Headquarters, Johnstown Castle Estate, Co Wexford.

This conference is now firmly established as the showcase event for wood energy in Ireland and once again the event combines a professional conference with practical demonstrations into one comprehensive event.

The event will showcase the use and deployment of solid biomass, in particular wood energy and raise awareness across all sectors – from the landowner to the end user. It will include a site visit and demonstration by Teagasc demonstration highlighting thinning on local forest site plus live demonstration on the production and transport of wood chips and firewood processing.

### Further information

* [Frances McHugh](mailto:frances.mchugh@teagsc.ie), Teagasc, Wexford, 059-9183486
* [Paul Dykes](mailto:pauld@reio.ie), SEAI REIO, 023-8842193
* [John Fennessy](mailto:john.fennessy@agriculture.gov.ie), DAFF/COFORD,01-6072944

Attendance is subject to payment of a registration fee of €60 per person. The most convenient way to register is online: [www.seai.ie/bookshop](http://www.seai.ie/bookshop). Alternatively, registration forms can be downloaded from [www.teagasc.ie/forestry](http://www.teagasc.ie/forestry) or contact Teagasc, Dublin Road, Enniscorthy, Co Wexford on 053-9233332.

# RASLRES

WOOD ENERGY WORKSHOP

BUILDING LOCAL WOOD HEAT MARKETS

14 June 2011

Villa Rose Hotel, Ballybofey, Co. Donegal

13:30 – 18:30

RASLRES is a European bio-energy project led by the Western Development Commission. RASLRES goes to the heart of the local community by using local resources and supporting local people to develop renewable energy projects and in turn creating jobs and enterprise opportunities for rural communities. RASLRES is funded by the INTERREG IVB - Northern Periphery Programme. Our project partners are from Sweden, Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Faroe Islands and Finland.

This workshop brings together industry experts to investigate how to build local loops of demand and supply in the wood heat market. It is of specific interest to farmers, foresters and fuel processors. It will inform potential users on key issues for developing a wood energy project and discuss experiences in the region to date. A key element of the workshop will be the presentation of a report, which was carried out in partnership with the SEAI and Teagasc, on the potential of energy crops in the Western Region.

**While this workshop is free of charge, registration is required.** To register please call the WDC office at 094 9861441 or email [info@raslres.eu](mailto:info@raslres.eu)

# Research Programme

# Birch improvement programme

Broadleaves constitute an expanding area of the Irish forest estate and are likely to increase further in area future years. While there is a growing interest in planting native broadleaves, only a small number have commercial timber production potential.

A COFORD funded improvement programme in silver birch(*Betula pendula*) and common birch(*Betula pubescence*) has been ongoing since 1997, when individual ‘plus trees’ were selected throughout Ireland, and in subsequent years when their progeny have been tested on a number of sites. The work has been carried out at Teagasc, UCC and UCD.

Assessment of the trials has identified the best performers to date in terms of productivity and form. These have been selected and grafted onto rootstocks in an indoor seed orchard established at the Teagasc Research Station at Kinsealy. In 2009 the first small quantity of improved Irish birch seed became available, while a further quantity was also collected in 2010. This seed is currently been processed and will initially be distributed to a small number of nurseries. Plants are expected to be available for the 2012/13 planting season. The intention is expand seed production to a level where it can provide most if not all of the birch used in the national afforestation programme and elsewhere as needed.

For further information contact Dr Elaine O’Connor at: [elaine.oconnor@teagasc.ie](mailto:elaine.oconnor@teagasc.ie)

# STANDMODEL Project Update

The aim of the COFORD STANDMODEL Project is to continue development of dynamic yield models which are currently used by the Irish forestry sector and available as part of GROWFOR, the dynamic yield model interface. GROWFOR is a forest management tool launched in 2005. It is a decision support system which assists foresters and forest owners in forecasting the growth and yield of their forests. Unlike the alternatively available Forestry Commission models, GROWFOR is based on Irish data and allows users to input data from their own forests and forecast future growth and yield according to their own future management intentions. To date, the species incorporated in the system are Sitka spruce, Douglas fir, lodgepole pine, Norway spruce and Scots pine.

One of the objectives of the STANDMODEL project was to develop user defined assortments, whereby users could query the dynamic models as to the outturn of specific grades / dimensions of timber associated with specific products. This has now been completed and is undergoing final testing while being incorporated into GROWFOR. When this is complete a new version of GROWFOR incorporating the new assortment function will be released to all registered users. Use of GROWFOR is permitted by licence from COFORD following the completion of a one day training course. The next training course will be held in the autumn and anyone interested in attending and becoming a licensed GROWFOR user should contact Paddy Purser ([ptr@eircom.net](mailto:ptr@eircom.net)). Participants in the STANDMODEL project are UCD (Andrew McCullagh, Maarten Nieuwenhuis and Charles Harper), PTR (Paddy Purser), Coillte (Ted Lynch) and consultant, Lance Broad.

*Contributed by Paddy Purser*

# QualiBroad

Congratulations to Colin Doody, who passed his PhD examination in early May. His thesis is entitled *Impact of pre-treatments on the dormancy status and germination potential of pedunculate oak, common ash and spindle*. His research was part of the QualiBroad project, funded by COFORD from 2001 to 2011. QualiBroad focused on the development of new and improved seed pre-treatments and cultural methods with a view to increasing seedling quality and yield in several broadleaf species, including common alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), birch (*Betula pendula* and *Betula pubescens*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*), spindle tree (*Euonymus europaeus*), rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*) and blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*). Most of the findings have now been implemented in practice by the nursery sector.

For further information contact Dr Conor O’Reilly at: [conor.oreilly@ucd.ie](mailto:conor.oreilly@ucd.ie)

# National and international news

# Minister of State McEntee Opens National IFA Farm Forestry Conference 2011

*Thursday, 28th April, The Killeshin Hotel, Portlaoise, Co. Laois*

Shane McEntee TD, Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine with special responsibility for forestry, formally opened the IFA Farm Forestry Conference.

Noting the theme of this year's Conference 'Working together to mobilise the private timber resource', Minister of State McEntee commented that "Encouraging people to plant forestry is one part of the ongoing development of forestry but there are also subsequent challenges including the mobilisation of that privately owned timber, which today's conference will be discussing."

One element of the conference was a discussion on the experiences of forest producer groups, a number of which have been formed throughout the country over the last number of years as a means by which forest owners share information and experiences and, in some cases, co-operate in marketing their products to achieve economies of scale.   At the Conference, the IFA Farm Forestry section were also launching "A Practical Guide to Forest Owner Organisations" to assist and advise forest owners on the formation of such groups.  The Minister noted that "the private timber resource is becoming a significant element of our timber supply with privately owned forests now accounting for about 46% of Ireland's forest resource.  Another feature is that these are mainly owned by farmers."

Highlighting the importance of extracting the privately owned timber and bringing it to market, the Minister of State added "In addition to the traditional outlets in the wood processing sector, wood energy has developed significantly in the last number of years.  The increasing price of fossil fuels and the increasing focus on the use of green energy are both factors in this development.  I understand that the aim of the IFA project, being launched here today, is to assist forest owners in Ireland to increase wood output and usage."

Referring to the recent inclusion of forestry in his brief, Minister of State McEntee added that he looked forward to meeting and working with representatives of the forestry sector to sustain and develop the sector.

# Minister of State McEntee Opens Irish Forestry, Woodland and Bio Energy Show 2011

Shane McEntee TD, Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine with responsibility for forestry, opened the Irish Forestry, Woodland and Bio Energy Show 2011 at Birr Castle demesne, Birr, Co Offaly.

He said "Given the large numbers who have opted for forestry over the last number of years and the increasing importance of bio-energy, a show dealing with forestry and bio-energy is welcome and timely."

The Minister of State welcomed the range of exhibits and demonstrations organised as part of the Show and made particular reference to presentations on topical issues in the Education and Conference Centre, organised by the Irish Timber Growers Association, with support from his Department and added "I believe the displays and presentations in the Education and Conference Centre will be of particular interest as they range from the most recent forecasts for timber volumes over the next number of years and information on the new EU timber trader regulation to information on forests, wildlife, biodiversity, recreation and carbon sequestration".

The Minister stressed the importance of protecting the existing forest resource and, referring to the recent outbreaks of forest fires, publicly thanked the Emergency Services, the Army, the Air Corps, the Gardai and all others involved for their efforts in combating the fires: "It is vital that we all remain vigilant and report any suspicious activities to the appropriate authorities immediately".

Thanking all those involved in organising the show, the Minister added "*Not only does the Show allow those in Forestry and Bio Energy to showcase their industries but it provides the general public with a valuable opportunity to get an insight into the sector and gain information on our national woodland resource*."

# News from the Irish Forest, Woodland and Bioenergy Show 2011

Approximately 5000 visitors attended the recent Irish Forestry, Woodland and Bio energy Show in Birr over the two days of the 6/7 May last. There were over 90 exhibitors, feedback was very positive with exhibitors saying that they found there was real interest from those attending and many reported doing excellent business. It had been 14 years since the previous Show and the success of this recent event highlights both the interest in the sector and the emerging economic importance of the forestry and timber industry. The Irish Timber Growers Association, which hosted the ITGA Conference centre at the heart of the event with funding assistance from Forest Service, were very happy to be associated with the Show. The various Universities and groups, including many COFORD funded projects, showcased the significant economic, environmental and social benefits of forestry in the Conference centre and they all must be acknowledged for having excellent displays. ITGA would like to thank all those involved in the Conference centre. The Show organiser, David Wilkinson, has been so encouraged by the positive feedback from the event that he has already committed to organising the next Show in May 2013. The 2012 ITGA Yearbook will include more information on this next Show. Many of the ITGA Conference centre proceedings are now available on <http://www.itga.ie/itgaconference.asp>

*Contributed by Donal Whelan, Technical Director, Irish Timber Growers Association*

# Minister of State visits people and areas affected by the land and forest fires in Donegal

*Press Release 8th May 2011*

Following on from his meeting with emergency teams in the midlands, Minister of State Shane McEntee TD visited Donegal on Saturday calling to families, communities and localities across the county that have been devastated by the recent spate of land and forest fires.

In county Donegal, the Minister of State witnessed the extensive damage caused to forestry and property near the towns of Glenties, Ardara and Dunloe. On the road between Ardara and Dunloe there are several private houses where families had been evacuated before the flames were doused within a few metres of the premises. Mr McEntee heard at first hand the stories of some families who had been evacuated.

"Obviously, I’ve had very good, regular reports of what has been happening through our own Forestry Service and Coillte.  However, reports alone cannot convey the full horror of what has happened.  I wanted to see for myself at first hand and to express my solidarity with the people affected", he said.

Representatives of Coillte, the Forestry Service, Gardai, Army, Air Corps and county council briefed the Minister of State on the latest situation in county Donegal, where the fires are now under control but some are still smouldering and are being kept under observation. Accompanied by the Minister of State for Gaeltacht Affairs, Dinny McGinley TD, he met a number of local forestry growers. Mr McEntee said: "It’s important that we review what has happened to see what lessons are to be learned for the future. In particular, it may be necessary to develop a template for householders living in remote areas to brief them on how they can help us respond to fire threats and what measures they can take themselves to minimise any potential threat to their own dwellings".

# Minister of State meets Emergency Teams

## and says 'Thank You' to everyone involved in fighting Land and Forest Fires

## Press Release 8th May 2011

The Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Shane McEntee TD, has visited the Coillte offices in Mullingar, county Westmeath, to meet crews involved in the fight against land and forest fires and to get an on-the-spot evaluation of the latest situation.

The Minister of State told a meeting of Coillte, Fire Service, Civil Defence, Defence Forces and Garda personnel who had been deployed: "I want to convey my personal thanks and that of the Government to everyone who has been involved in fighting forest and land fires for the past week or so. It has been a very tough battle but I want everyone of you involved to know how much your courage, skill and long hours of work are appreciated by our people. What you have been doing is the very essence of public service."

The Minister of State continued: "I have been struck by the notable involvement of local communities and farmers in co-operating with the State services in helping to curb and extinguish these fires.   I want to thank them as well and to commend them.  A sense of community of solidarity is something that will help us to pull through the difficult times we face but the way you have tackled the challenge of forest fires gives me confidence that our communities  have the resilience to overcome the many other major difficulties we face".

The Minister of State was briefed on the latest situation by Mr John O’Sullivan, Coillte National Fire co-ordinator and Mr PJ Fitzpatrick, Coillte District Manager.

# The European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS)

The European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS) is an integrated web-based spatial information system that provides access to real-time pre- and post-forest fire information across Europe. EFFIS is the focal point of information on forest fires in Europe. It has been established by the European Commission Joint Research Centre and the Directorate General for Environment to support the national services in charge of the protection of forests against fires in the EU and neighboring countries, and to provide the EC services and the European Parliament with up to date and harmonized information on forest fires in Europe. Fire prevention, preparedness, active fire fighting and post-fire assessments are supported by EFFIS. The online mapping tool displays pan-European, spatially referenced forest fire information that includes: fire hot spots, delineations of burnt areas and forecasted Fire Danger levels derived from meteorological forecast data. In addition, during the main fire season, local authorities receive daily updates of forecasted fire danger. EFFIS also maintains a historic database of individual forest fire events in Europe collected by the national services, which is a valuable repository of information used for research and modeling purposes.

Further information on EFFIS is available at: [http://effis.jrc.ec.europa.eu](http://effis.jrc.ec.europa.eu/) and the web-mapping tool of the current situation can be found here: <http://effis.jrc.ec.europa.eu/current-situation>

# The restoration programme of American chestnut

This time of year a century ago, in the US, especially in the State of Kentucky forest ridges would have looked almost snowy with blooms from American chestnut. It's a sight local volunteers want future generations to see again. American chestnuts in the past were massive hardwoods highly prized for their timber, tannin and nuts. But all were but lost a half-century ago to an Asian blight that killed four billion of them, decimating twenty five percent of the Eastern US forest tree canopy. However, years of efforts to restore the American chestnut are finally succeeding especially in the Louisville area. Nuts from a major research farm in Virginia that were bred over the past 28 years to be blight resistant were planted at public and private sites in the Louisville area this year. Like all breeding programmes, only a limited number of nuts were available.

Furthermore, members of the Kentucky chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation are breeding offspring of the state's 20 surviving trees for blight resistance and research. An orchard in Oldham County is expected to bear nuts this autumn for the first time. The ultimate goal is to restore the American chestnut to the Eastern forest, where it was once the dominant hardwood, so it can again provide an abundance of high-quality food for wildlife and strong, rot-resistant timber for building needs, said Bryan Burhans, president and CEO of the American Chestnut Foundation. “We want to bring back an iconic tree species that was so much a part of history, culture and heritage,” he said concluding that “There was no other tree that could replace the niche that it occupied.”

Louisville-area volunteers who are planting and growing American chestnuts say their work will help the public learn about the tree. “I'm anxious to see them restored to the countryside,” said George Gibbs, a retired forester who contributed $250,000 to Louisville's 21st Century Parks for a chestnut restoration program. “I may not live that long, but I'd like to see it started.”

Once called the “redwood of the east,” American chestnuts grew in over 200 million acres, from Maine to Mississippi, most prolifically in the Appalachian Mountains. They averaged 5 feet in diameter, towered more than 100 feet tall and could live up to 400 years. Foresters called the American chestnut a “cradle to grave” species, because its strong, light wood was used for everything from cribs to caskets. Each tree produced bushels of small, nutritious nuts that fed wildlife and livestock. Rural people harvested the nuts in the autumn and sold them to urban markets for cooking and roasting. The chestnut was a huge part of the ecosystem.

The blight that killed the trees was a fungus dispersed via spores in the air, rain or by animals and was imported on Asian chestnut trees around 1904 and was first discovered in New York. It spread about 50 miles a year and arrived in Kentucky by the 1930’s, said Dr. Anne Myers Bobigian of Louisville, a retired physician and treasurer of the American Chestnut Foundation's Kentucky chapter.“Shortly thereafter everything was dead,” she said. The blight attacks the tree's vascular system, not its roots, so sprouts can still be found around stumps, but they rarely survive and mature.

Since 1983, the American Chestnut Foundation, which has a 150-acre research farm in Meadowview, Va., has been selectively breeding trees that have the Asian chestnut’s blight resistance, but retain the American chestnut’s desirable characteristics, like its timber and nuts.

It has taken six generations of intercrosses and backcrosses to create a tree that is potentially 94 percent American and is blight resistant. Offspring of these trees are the most likely to survive in forest land and were planted in Kentucky for the first time this year.

For full story, please see: [www.courier-journal.com/article/20110522/GREEN/305220071/American-chestnut-s-revival-taking-root-Louisville?odyssey=tab%7Ctopnews%7Ctext%7CHome](http://www.courier-journal.com/article/20110522/GREEN/305220071/American-chestnut-s-revival-taking-root-Louisville?odyssey=tab%7Ctopnews%7Ctext%7CHome)

For further information on the revival of the American chestnut: [www.kychestnut.org](http://www.kychestnut.org).

# Technology Collaboration

## Seeking experience and know-how in Sitka Spruce processing and related products

A French cluster working with Sitka spruce in the forest and timber industries is interested in exchanging experiences with Irish, Scottish or Danish companies about the construction products made of Sitka, technologies and transformation process used or being developed. It aims to add value to that timber by promoting its use in building and encourage the structuring of Sitka spruce industry and new product development to supply its domestic market. Technical cooperation is sought**.**

**Ref: 11 FR 34K2 3LCT**

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For further information: [Seeking experience and know-how in Sitka Spruce processing and related products](http://www.een-ireland.ie/eei/trt.asp?sn=PROFILES&sd=20110525&s=288&c=BBS&cr=11%20FR%2034K2%203LCT&si=249)

# Teagasc Forestry enters the Facebook and Twitter domain

Teagasc’s Forestry Development Department has joined Facebook and Twitter - follow the links at [www.teagasc.ie/forestry](http://www.teagasc.ie/forestry).

1. Subject to final verification and checking [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. EUROSTAT Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire (2008-2011) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Includes import/export figures for sawn timber, wood-based panels and pulp/paper products only. Data are taken from EUROSTAT JFSQ Ireland returns (2008-2011). Roundwood, sawmill residues and secondary processed timber products are not included. Trade data are provided by the Central Statistics Office. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)