

COFORD Forestry and Wood Update

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# 1. Season’s Greetings

We would like to wish all of our subscribers a happy and peaceful Christmas and prosperous New Year.

 We would also like to thank all of those who contributed articles to and provided information for the monthly newsletter throughout the past nine months. If there are any new areas that you feel we should endeavour to cover over the next year please let us know by emailing info@coford.ie. We always welcome suggestions and feedback, it is through such reaction that we improve the content of the newsletter.

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# 2. Irish Forestry and Wood Awards

The Forest Service of the Dept. of the Marine and Natural Resources sponsors the RDS Irish Forestry and Wood Awards every year. This year the scheme featured four categories. The winner of each category receives a cheque for £1,000, a perpetual trophy and an RDS medal. This year’s winners were announced by Mr Hugh Byrne, Minister of State at the Dept. of the Marine and Natural Resources at a ceremony in held in Powerscourt on December 12th. The winners in each category were:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Farm Forestry** | John Kenny, Roscrea |
| **Urban/Recreational Forestry** | Belleek Woods |
| **Commercial Timber and Craft Enterprise** | Coillte, Dundrum Sawmills |
| **Bio-diverse Woodlands** | Jack Tenison, Castleblaney |

Some of the other entries were of a sufficient high standard to receive a Certificate of Merit. These were awarded as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Commercial Timber and Craft Enterprise**: | Con Doyle, Baltinglass |
| **Bio-diverse Woodlands**: | Tony, Michael & Margaret Griffith, Co Down |

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# 3. Funding programmes.

Over the past 18 months COFORD has launched three calls for proposals in strategic research areas under our 2000-2006 programme. The resulting research programme is now being finalised. A further gap analysis will take place towards the end of 2002 to identify any remaining areas that need to be addressed. Full details of our research programme will be given in our 2001 Annual Report, which will be available in early 2002.

However, we are still accepting proposals under our applied research programme in the following areas:

Applied programme – Open Call

1. **Communications and Information Technology**
2. **Mechanisation (Harvesting and Silviculture)**
3. **Product and Process Development**

Interested parties should contact COFORD requesting the project specification and other relevant documentation by post, fax or email. Alternatively, all documents and applicant forms can be downloaded from our website.

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# 4. New Projects

Forest Vegetation – Alternative Management Systems ( FORVAMS)

One of the keys to successful establishment of a forest crop is the protection of young plants from non-crop species. Traditionally, forest managers have relied on herbicides to suppress weed species. However, increased environmental awareness has prompted a re-examination of pesticide use in forest ecosystems. Unfortunately, adequate alternatives to herbicides do not currently exist for Irish forest conditions. Hence, COFORD sought tenders to conduct research in the area of alternative vegetation control methods. A contract has now been awarded to Dr Nick McCarthy at Waterford Institute of Technology.

Successful alternatives to herbicides must be socially acceptable, safe, environmentally sound, effective and economic, in keeping with the principles of Sustainable Forest Management. The project will investigate the effectiveness of a range of mulches and other mechanised control mechanisms. It will run for three years.

At the project launch in Waterford, Minister of State at the Dept. of the Marine and Natural Resources, Mr Hugh Byrne TD, said, “Research in particular is a vital tool in developing a sector that is sustainable in production, economic, environmental and social terms. This project’s objective of developing alternatives to herbicide-based vegetation management systems continues the move towards greater understanding of our environment in forestry management practices.”

Minister Byrne added that it was fitting that the project is taking place in the Southeast region, given the flourishing forest industry there. “About 80% of the nursery sector’s £10 million annual turnover is generated in the Wexford/Carlow/South Wicklow area. All in all, the forest industry makes a significant contribution to the economy of the region. The turnover is of the order of £100 million per annum, which generates as many as 2,000 permanent jobs. The importance of forestry, from both a socio-economic and an environmental point of view, cannot be overstressed.”

The Economic Contribution of the Forestry Sector to the National and Local Economies (ECONTRIB)

The environmental benefits of forestry and forest products are well known and documented. However, there is a dearth of knowledge on the real economic contribution that forestry and its associated activities makes at both local and national level. To this end COFORD sought proposals from suitably qualified individuals or teams on how this information could be gathered in an effective manner.

The contract is being awarded to a team consisting of UCD, Coillte and MOK Consulting. The project will run for three years and among its objectives are:

1. to evaluate the direct and indirect contribution of forestry to the Irish economy;
2. to analyse the opportunity costs for the forestry sector with regard to alternative land-uses;
3. to review the social implications and the implications for sustainable development of the findings from (a) and (b);
4. to evaluate the social and economic contribution of forestry to the rural economy and sustainable development in Ireland;
5. to develop social indicators of sustainable forest management

The project will involve the collecting of data from a wide range of forestry organisations and companies. We would ask all parties to fully support this project by facilitating the collation of the necessary information. Further updates will follow in later issues of this newsletter.

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# 5. Publications

On December 10, Minister Hugh Byrne, TD launched two new COFORD publications at the Waterford Institute of Technology:

1. *A Review of Legislation that Impacts on Forestry in Ireland*

This publication, written by Ms Barbara Maguire, presents an overview of all Irish legislation with relevance to forestry or the forest industry. It is written in an easy to follow format and should be of great assistance to anyone with a need to refer to, or quote, current and past legislation that deals with forestry on the island.

1. *Vegetative Propagation Techniques for Oak, Ash, Sycamore and Spruce*

Irish forest nurseries produce 80 million plants each year. Conifers account for the bulk of production – 67 million plants - but the proportion of broadleaves is ever increasing and they account for the balance of 13 million plants. It is vital that the afforestation programme is underpinned by the use of quality, vigorous planting stock. Planting stock quality contributes significantly to the return on the forestry investment. The investigation of techniques to improve planting stock quality has been an integral part of the COFORD R&D programme since 1995. Vegetative propagation using rooted cuttings is growing in popularity as a means to rapidly introduce genetically improved planting stock. Other related techniques are being developed which may have application in both coniferous and broadleaved species. These include somatic embryogenesis and photoautotrophic micropropagation. Both are at the early stages of development but they offer considerable advantages in rapidly deploying superior genetic material.

COFORD has funded research on vegetative propagation in a number of projects since 1995. Under the programme, methodologies for producing quality planting stock material have been refined and further developed. While further work is necessary to improve the cost-efficiency of such methods, superior planting stock is now being made ready for field-testing under the current COFORD programme. This phase will demonstrate how successful the development work has been.

The authors of the publication are:

David Thompson

Fiona Harrington

Gerry Douglas

Michael J. Hennerty

Nasrin Nakshab

Roger Long

 Both publications are available from the COFORD office. They can also be downloaded free-of- charge from the COFORD on-line bookshop at <http://www.coford.ie/frames/bookshop.html>

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# 6. COFORD Irish Forestry Calendar

We would like to remind all subscribers to refer to the Irish Forestry Calendar on the COFORD website before organising forestry-related events in 2002. This avoids overlapping with other events and ‘diluting’ the target audience. The calendar may be viewed at:

 [www.coford.ie/frames/seminars.html](http://www.coford.ie/frames/seminars.html)

Any individual, or organisation, wishing to have an events hosted on the calendar should email info@coford.ie giving details of the event, time, date, location and contact details. We will immediately put the event on the calendar for all visitors to our site to see and take note of. We can also include details of the event in future issues of this newsletter.

Event organisers should refer to the site before organising their occasion, to avoid conflicting with existing events, or possibly to link up with these events to provide a more attractive joint venture that would generate a larger attendance.

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# 7. Carbon Corner

Since the last Carbon Corner COP7 *-* the seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change - to give it its full title - has taken place at Marrakech in Morocco. It was held over a two-week period in late October/early November. Just before sunrise on the morning of the 10th of November political agreement was reached on all the outstanding issues. The fine print of the political agreement, including forestry, is set out in the so-called ‘Marrakesh Accords’. The complete text of the accords is on the UNFCCC web site at <http://unfccc.int/> (click on Marrakesh Accords, Advance Text of COP7 Decisions). The forestry part is covered in pages 118 to 127.

It has to be pointed out that LULUCF (land-use, land-use change and forestry) was not a negotiation issue as such in Marrakech. Following the sixth resumed session at Bonn earlier in the year, the COP6 forwarded to COP7 a draft decision on LULUCF (L11/Rev1). The only remaining major issue was the size of the forest management sink (under forest management, article 3.4) that had been allocated to Russia in the Bonn text. The Russian Federation was seeking a higher amount. At the end of the negotiations Russia was allocated an additional 16 M (million) t carbon per year to bring its total to 33 M t of.

While LULUCF *per se* was not a negotiation issue there were, however, a large number of cross cutting issues relating to forestry in articles 5, 7 and 8 of the protocol. These had to be teased-out and agreed. Discussions on Article 7.4 in particular were protracted and difficult. This article deals with how national communications on emissions and sinks are reported under the protocol. It also covers modalities for the accounting for assigned amounts (the net amount of greenhouse gases that parties are allowed to emit). A new name was proposed and adopted for sink credits under Articles 3.3 and 3.4. These will be called “removal units” or “RMUs” (paragraph 4 on page 103 of the Marrakesh Accords).

A national registry will be established in each country that ratifies the protocol. This will issue a unique serial number to recognise and track sinks units as they trade from one party or entity to another (paragraphs 27 (d) on page 109 of the accords).

Principal among the other crosscutting negotiation issues was whether a party to the protocol could carry-over or ‘bank’ sink credits from the first commitment period to subsequent periods. A number of countries were opposed to banking, as was the EU. Eventually a compromise was reached whereby, although sink credits could not be carried over, they could be exchanged for other units that could be carried over.

 These are just come of the issues that arose during an intensive two-week period of technical discussions and political negotiations. But the most important outcome was that there was an overall political agreement. The EU and the member states can now embark on ratification of the Kyoto Protocol. The target is to have ratification by all member states and the EU completed before the end of 2002. Ireland is now involved in this process; the Kyoto Protocol will probably come before the Dáil for ratification in the New Year.

 There is no doubt that the forestry sector will have a significant role to play in the National Climate Change Strategy (this latter addresses, *inter alia*, the targets set out in the protocol). And not just from the afforestation perspective. As pointed out in previous Carbon Corners we are convinced that there is real scope under the protocol and national strategy for the use of wood as a renewable energy source – to partly replace fossil fuels. The use of wood in the built environment will also result in significant direct and indirect reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

 The coming years will see the evolution of policy measures related to how sinks credits will be formally registered and traded. We are just at the beginning of this process.

 Carbon Corner wishes to acknowledge the work and reporting of the Belgian (EU Presidency) forestry sinks expert team at Marrakech. Part of this article is comprised of abridged text from their Marrakech report.

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# 8. Vacancy: KARE – Kerry Awareness of Renewable Energy

The South Kerry Development Partnership Ltd., on behalf of the KARE Consortium, wishes to recruit a Project Co-ordinator.

The objective of the KARE initiative is to work within the transnational network to place Co Kerry onto a clear and firm pathway towards the realisation of the utilisation of 100% renewable energy sources. The transnational network includes representative organisations from the Teesdale District in the UK, Kalmar and Kronoberg in Sweden and the Trentino District in Italy. To realise the overall objective, the co-ordinator will be expected to support the formation and development of the Co Kerry consortium and the preparation of a county plan for renewable energy, designed to progressively bring such sources into productive use.

The post is based in Co Kerry and will involve the following:

1. Responsibility for developing and devising a county energy audit
2. Design and implement an integrated awareness-building programme focused on stimulating local markets for renewable Energy Sources
3. Encourage rational use of energy
4. Build upon the county’s image as being ‘environmentally aware’
5. Present reports and analysis in support of the work in hand to the consortium

Candidates must hold a recognised technical qualification and three years post-qualification experience. The salary scale is €33,224-€40,262 depending on experience. Interested individuals should contact South Kerry Development Partnership Ltd., The Old Barracks, Bridge Street, Cahersiveen, Co Kerry – phone (066) 9472724.

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# 9. Irish Joinery Awards

The 2001 Irish Joinery Awards were presented by Minister of the Environment and Local Government, Mr Noel Dempsey, TD at a ceremony in the Green Isle Hotel on November 14th. The winners in each of the categories are as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Public Building**: | Civic Offices Dunshaughlin |
| **Private/Residential**: | New Library at Glenstal Abbey and Clarinbridge Housing Developments (Joint Winners) |
| **Furniture Category**: | Michael Bell Conference Room Furniture |
| **Conservation/Restoration**: | Baltinglass Courthouse |

Two additional projects were commended. These were the Waterford City Millennium project and the Carrickmines Croquet and Lawn Tennis Club. The Irish Timber Trade Association runs the Irish Joinery Awards.

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# 10. Quality Officer Appointed to ICTGA

The Irish Christmas Tree Growers Association aims to foster the production and promote the sale of real Irish Christmas trees. To assist the attainment of this goal, they have just appointed Mr John O’Connell as a full-time quality officer. One of John’s tasks is to build up a database of growers, listing species, age and area. COFORD wishes John every success in his effort to move the sector further upmarket.

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# 11. COFORD Nursery Seminar and Field Visit

Forests now cover 9% of the land area of Ireland. This is set to rise, at a rate of 20,000 ha per annum, to 17% by 2030. This activity requires the just-in-time supply of almost 70 million trees every year. A two-day seminar hosted by COFORD and the Irish Forest Nurseries Association, was held at the Seven Oaks Hotel and the Coillte nursery in Ballintemple on November 16th and 17th. Delegates from throughout Great Britain and Ireland and as far afield as Iceland attended. Presentations outlined the positive impact that R&D has had on building up the nursery sector in Ireland. In particular, projects funded by jointly industry and COFORD has proved highly successful.

The social and environmental benefits of forestry are well known, but often the economic contribution that the forest industry makes to the rural economy is underestimated. Mr David Nevins, Chairman of COFORD reported “COFORD-funded R&D has helped the sector improve the quality of the product and service, allowing it to now provide over 200 jobs directly. This employment level swells to over 400 at seasonal peaks. This is equivalent to a large factory and the indirect jobs created, and subsequent wealth generated, contribute significantly to the economy of the South-east.”

Coillte’s nursery manager, Mr Pat Long reported that “the total turnover of the forest nursery sector is almost €13 million per annum. Almost 85% of this is generated in the Carlow/ Wexford/south Wicklow area. This is largely due to the activity in Coillte’s nurseries in Ballintemple, Aughrim and Camolin as well as None-so-Hardy nurseries.”

Mr Joe O' Carroll, Research Manager of COFORD reported that from 1994-2000 a total of £1.3 million was spent on forest nursery research and development. Companies within the sector provided almost 30% of this funding, with the remainder coming from COFORD. The innovation in the sector was continuing and a further project to improve the quality of broadleaved trees produced in Irish nurseries had just been agreed between COFORD, Coillte and UCD. The outcome of this project will further enhance the value-adding potential of the companies located in the region.

The papers presented at the seminar are available from COFORD. The assistance of Coillte Nurseries in hosting the event making is gratefully acknowledged. .

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# 12. Next Year’s Seminar/Workshop programme

2001 was a difficult year for organising meetings, given the restriction imposed by the Foot & Mouth crisis. Next year will see a return to normal service levels with regular workshops and seminars targeted at specific sectors and groups. We are happy to be able to bring you a provisional list of events for next year as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date | Event |
| January 29 | Forest Roading Manual – Consultation Workshop |
| February | Dynamic Yield Models/Wood Optimisation Software Workshop |
| March/April | WOODSPEC Regional workshops |
| March | Forest Biodiversity Seminar (to coincide with National Tree Week) |
| April | Broadleaf/Hardwood Conference |
| May | Innovation in Wood Products |
| July | Whole-tree chipping of early thinnings – demonstration and workshop |
| July | Wood as a fuel – Seminar |
| November | Forest Research Symposium (to coincide with National Science Week) |

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# 13. WOODSPEC Functionality Expanded

Continuing with our commitment to improve the timber technical support service available to specifiers and architects, COFORD has added a free technical advice service to the Woodspec section of our website. Now visitors to our website can email a query to woodspec@coford.ie on any aspect of timber, wood products, application, detailing or design. We guarantee a response within 48 hours. We have secured the services of well–known and respected experts to provide this unique service. It is another positive development in our policy of supporting key influencers in materials specification.

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