

COFORD Forestry and Wood Update

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## Edited by: Joe O’Carroll, Operations Manager

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# 1. Introduction

As we all settle back into work after the Christmas break, it is useful to reflect on what has been a very active 2001. In the coming weeks we will be finalising our 2001 Annual Report, copies of which will be available from the COFORD office and the website. The report sets out the research programme as it has developed during the year. Most projects have now been signed up and will begin in earnest over the next few months, as staff members are recruited.

Indeed some of the short projects will be completed at the end of this month and final reports will be available soon after.

A gap analysis and consultation will take place towards the end of the year to begin the development of our next Call for Proposals, which will take place in the first half of 2003. The COFORD executive will be restored to its full complement by the beginning of March with interviews for vacant positions taking place in the coming week. Profiles of new staff will follow in later issues.

Also, Mr Hugh Byrne, Minister of State at the Department of the Marine and Natural Resources will offically launch the BIOFOREST project at a ceremony in UCC on January 24th.

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# 2. Staff Departure

It is with regret that we must inform you that one of the key staff members at COFORD over the past several years, Dr Miriam Ryan, has resigned from her position as research projects officer to take up a new position with the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. Miriam has given great service to COFORD and its stakeholders for the past five years. In addition to her core role, Miriam also worked intensively on the preparation of the Forestry and Water Quality Guidelines, one of the Forest Service’s suite of five guideline documents.

 Miriam also represented COFORD on the board of the Tree Council of Ireland and was the Irish contact person for ETFRN – the European Tropical Forestry Research Network. She is also a member of the National Inland Fisheries Forum and vice-chairperson of the ESAI (Environmental Sciences Association of Ireland).

A colleague of Miriam’s calibre will not be easy to replace but we wish her well with her new position where we are sure she will continue to flourish.

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# 3. New Projects

# Since our last newsletter we have agreed details on the following projects:

# Forestry and the Potential for Surface Water Acidification (WaterAc)

This project is being co-funded by COFORD and the EPA. The contract has been awarded to a consortium led by Prof Paul Giller and Dr John O’Halloran of the Dept of Zoology and Animal Ecology at UCC. Project partners include Dr Norman Allott of TCD, Dr Mary Kelly-Quinn of UCD and Dr Philip O’Dea & Dr Dick McCarthy of Coillte. The project will run for two years.

Acidification is known to occur when atmospheric deposition of strong acid anions exceed the buffering capacity of the soil resulting in the leaching of certain particles. The overall objective of the project is to help to determine and contribute to management practices that could prevent and ameliorate impacts of some forest operations on acidification of aquatic systems at different scales.

Specific targets of the project are:

1. determine biological indicators for (and sensitivity grades within) the sodium dominance index
2. Through field experiments, assess the impact of silvicultural systems on water quality and acidification in collaboration with the ContinuCover project (see Vol 1, No 8, November 2001)
3. Use experiments to assess the efficacy of buffer strips and liming as a means of reducing impacts of acidification
4. Provide recommendations for revisions to management practices and the Forestry and Water Quality Guidelines

# Forest Operations and Eutrophication (P-Enrich)

This project is also being co-funded by the EPA. It will be conducted by the Forest Ecosystem Research Group, under the leadership of Prof Ted Farrell and by Coillte under the management of Dr Philip O’Dea.

Eutrophication in mainly caused by the input of phosphate into streams and rivers. The principal contributing causes for this are believed to be waste treatment facilities and agriculture. However, more information is needed on the impact of forest operations on phosphate levels in water. Although fertilser usage in forests is comparatively low, concerns have arisen due to the fact that much afforestation takes place on soils with low phosphate sorption capacity.

 The objectives of this study are to determine the impact, if any, of current forestry practices on P levels in surface waters and to assess the efficacy of the harvesting and water quality guidelines in minimising P loss. Recommendations will also be made on possible improvements to the Code of Best Forest Practice, thus ensuring that practice remains science-led.

There are four primary tasks in the project:

1. Determine the impact of forest operations on nutrient concentrations and loads in surface run-off at sub catchment level. This task will examine the impacts of clearfelling, wind-rowing, mound-draining and fertiliser application for reforestation.
2. A former agricultural site will be monitored pre- and post-planting for P loss. Given the likely increased area of former agricultural land being planted, it is important to have a thorough understanding of the dynamics of P loss.
3. A surface run-off experiment will be performed to assess tree growth and P loss for a range of fertiliser formulations
4. A study of buffer zones, and their potential to prevent eutrophication will also be undertaken. This will link with the WaterAc project previously described.

This project will run until early in 2005. Updates will be carried in future issues.

# Factors Influencing Farmer Participation in Forestry in Ireland (FARMATT)

Successive governments have pursued the objective of achieving the afforestation targets outlined in Growing for the Future – the Government’s strategic plan for the development of the forest industry. While significant in-roads have been made into this target it is evident that certain factors continue to militate against farmers making the decision to afforest their land, even in the face strong financial arguments. The contract to conduct this study has been awarded to Curtin Dorgan Associates Ltd. Its main objectives are to evaluate and, where possible, quantify:

1. the competitiveness of the financial incentives for afforestation relative to alternative enterprises, at present and in the future, taking account of changes in agricultural policies,
2. the impact of the wider socio-economic environment on the decision to afforest,
3. the impact of planning and environmental issues on the decision to afforest,
4. the effectiveness of promotional campaigns and attitudes to forestry, and
5. to identify and recommend initiatives to counter negative opinion and overcome any barriers which may exist.

The project will take six months to complete. The final report will be made widely available.

*Quantification of recycled wood waste that could be made available for energy production (Wood Waste)*

The overall aim of this project is to determine the commercial viability of wood waste for productive uses, thus improving the overall economic performance of the forest industry.

Specifically, the objectives are:

1. Accurately classify and quantify the volumes and quality of wood products currently disposed of in landfill and through other environmentally unfriendly methods.
2. Outline the suitability of this material as an energy source in wood-biomass energy production and/or particleboard production.
3. Identify and address each of the logistical issues impacting on the efficient collecting and use of wood waste.
4. Outline developments in government policy that will affect the disposal of this material and quantify the likely impact of these.
5. Identify potential environmental issues to be faced with burning this material.
6. Using international benchmarking to outline how these problems have been overcome in other countries and if these solutions can be applied in Ireland.
7. Identify any other potential solutions to enable the more efficient use of wood products at the end of their primary use.

The contract to conduct this study has been awarded to duQuesne Environmental Ltd. It will take six months to complete.

# Adding Value to Minor Species (MinorSpecies)

This project is being funded under our Applied Research Programme. Mr John Brady, Managing Director of Woodfab Timber Ltd, is leading it. Partners are Mr Richard Lowe, Coillte and Mr Kevin Maye, Wood Technology Centre, University of Limerick.

 The project will investigate the availability, sawing and preservative treatment of five species – noble fir, grand fir, silver fir, Monterey pine and lodgepole pine. In particular the suitability of these species as a raw material for external end-use applications will be determined. The target end-uses are not currently serviced by homegrown material.

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# 4. Publications

All COFORD 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>. The next COFORD publication will be the 2001 Annual Report, which will feature overviews of all projects being funded.

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# 5. International FAO/ECE/ILO Seminar for Ennis

The Joint FAO/ECE/ILO Committee on Forest Technology, Management and Training, in association with the Forest Service of the Department of the Marine and Natural Resources, will hold an international seminar in Ennis, Co Clare in September 2002. The seminar on Afforestation in the Context of Sustainable Forest Management (SFM), will run from September 15-19. Further details and a call for contributions will be issued shortly from the Joint Committee and the Forest Service but in the meantime mark these dates in your diary.

The objective of the seminar is to agree on best practice that ensures that afforestation proceeds in accordance with SFM. Topics will cover all aspects of afforestation from planning, through operations, to non-wood benefits. The event is being organised by Mr Diarmuid McAree, Chief Forestry Inspector and Mr Kevin Collins, Forestry Inspector – Environment, of the Forest Service.

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# 6. Carbon Corner

A new language is developing: carbon-speak. Ever since the climate change process began new words and phrases have been coined to describe the mechanisms that underpin the process. Whoever heard of fungibility? It was certainly a new word to Carbon corner when it was first heard at an international meeting. Surely a mistake, it must mean fundability, maybe functionality. But no, it is a perfectly respectable word that when applied to climate change means the ability to exchange one form of carbon accounting unit for another. For example forestry sink units will be called RMU’s – removal units – with each unit equivalent to one metric tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent. Another carbon accounting unit is a CER a certified emission reduction unit – issued under Article 12 of the Kyoto Protocol – the clean development mechanism. Under the Marrakesh Accords it is possible to exchange one RMU for one CER, as they are exactly equivalent. (However when trading begins these may have different monetary value. A higher risk may be attached to RMUs which are capable of being cancelled if the forest is harvested and not reforested ).

 To help find one’s way around carbon-speak there are a number of useful climate change glossaries available on the Internet:

* The US EPA site has a nice cross reference feature and a reference section for those interested in further reading: <http://www.epa.gov/globalwarming/glossary.html>
* Closer to home the EU has a short and snappy guide to the commoner climate change terms at <http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/climat/glossary.htm>. Similar to the EPA site it is cross referenced with HTML links.
* The UNFCCC secretariat also have a short glossary at

http://www.unfccc.int/siteinfo/glossary.html. It is extremely useful for those who may be new to the climate change process and is succinct and well written. There is also a link to other glossaries at <http://www.unfccc.int/resource/library/glossaries.html> on the UNFCCC site.

* An interesting site is www.Glossarist.com, a searchable and categorised directory of glossaries and topical dictionaries. The page for climate change is http://www.glossarist.com/glossaries/science/earth-sciences/climatology.asp. (Incidentally for the foresters among you there a comprehensive list of forestry glossaries is also available on the site at:

[http://www.glossarist.com/glossaries/science/earth-sciences/forestry.asp).](http://www.glossarist.com/glossaries/science/earth-sciences/forestry.asp%29.)

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# 7. Short-term Research Missions

As outlined in previous issue of *Forestry and Wood Update*, one of COFORD’s programmes offers funding for short-term research missions. This programme has been established by COFORD as part of its overall programme of forest research under the National Development Plan 2000-2006. It is aimed at research organisations and companies where academic or geographical isolation impedes research competence, capacity or performance. The primary objective of the programme is to allow researchers gain additional skills that will be used in forest research. Allied to this objective is the need to build on existing research networks and create new ones, in order to facilitate Irish participation in EU funded research and help in technology transfer and scientific interchange.

The applicant should be involved in research, preferably on a full-time basis. However, consideration will be given to those employed in, for example, companies where product or process research is a part of their work. Funding is not available for market research. The host institution(s) should be a recognised research organisation or company that has a demonstrable track record in research. Applications forms and guidelines are available at <http://www.coford.ie/funding/short_term_research_missions.html>

During 2001 COFORD funded six STRMs. These were as follows:

**IUFRO – Thinnings: a valuable Forest Management Tool.** Conference held in Quebec, Canada, September 2001.
Attended by Mr John Lyons, Coillte.  Mr Lyons presented a paper titled *Review of mechanised forest harvesting of thinnings in Ireland.*

 **Evaluation of the Potential of a Swedish Designed Planting Machine (ECO-Planter).** Study Tour to Sweden, July 2001.
Attended by Dr Michael Keane, Coillte.

**International Wood Machining Seminar.** Seminar held in Los Angeles, USA, July 2001.
Attended by Mr Sean Moloney, Wood Technology Centre, University of Limerick.  Mr Moloney presented a paper titled *Routing of Low Density Edge-glued Pine Panel Board.*  This paper was based on a COFORD-funded research project.

**Wood Breeding and Biotechnology.** Conference held in France, June 2001.
Attended by Ms Fiona Harrington, Coillte Research.

**Nursery Production and Stand Establishment of Broadleaves to Promote Sustainable Forest Management.** Seminar held in Italy, May 2001.
Attended by Dr Conor O’Reilly, University College Dublin.  Dr O’ Reilly co-presented a paper on *Effect of warm storage prior to planting on the field performance of oak in Ireland.*

**Sustainable Forestry to Protect Water Quality and Aquatic Biodiversity.** Seminar held in Sweden, March 2001.
Attended by Dr Norman Allott, Trinity College Dublin.

Copies of the reports from any of these missions are available from COFORD and will be uploaded to the website shortly.

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# 8. Scottish Forest Industry Cluster

During January, COFORD facilitated the visit of Mr Cedric Wilkins, Team Leader, Forest Industries Cluster. During Mr Wilkins’ visit meeting were arranged with InnovaWood, Enterprise Ireland, Irish Timber Council, Irish Timber Growers Association, Irish Timber Trade Association, Coillte and COFORD. The purpose of the visit was exchange of ideas on activities being undertaken in both Ireland and Scotland to develop their respective forest industries. The similarities between the two countries’ activities are remarkable. The next step will be to develop collaborative programmes so that we can truly cooperate to compete. The SFIC have a website at [www.forestryscotland.com](http://www.forestryscotland.com) and it is well worth a visit.

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# 9. Seminar: Marketing, valuing and grading of broadleaves

Our colleagues in the Forestry Commission have asked us to inform you of an up-coming seminar in Scotland. Entitled ‘Marketing, valuing and grading of broadleaves’ the seminar is being organised by the Scottish Hardwood Timber Market Development Group. It will be held in Blairquhan Estate, Aryshire on Wednesday, February 20, 2002. The aim of the seminar is described as follows: “To put across through presentation, field visit and exercise, how a timber merchant will grade and value hardwood timber, and to indicate the best timing(s) and method(s) of marketing such timber.”

The event will consist of an indoor morning session on marketing, valuing and grading of broadleaves and an outdoor session to put the morning’s knowledge into practice.

Application forms are available from Alex Dale, Forestry Commission, 231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh EH12 7AT.

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