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## CONTENTS

[New COFORD Research Programme Manager 1](#_Toc184532789)

[ForestEnergy 2007 seminar 1](#_Toc184532790)

[Wood biomass workshop extended to two days 2](#_Toc184532791)

[Published papers from COFORD-funded projects 3](#_Toc184532792)

[Finding the “Ideal” Christmas Tree 3](#_Toc184532793)

[Carbon Corner 4](#_Toc184532794)

[InnovaWood news 4](#_Toc184532795)

[Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food invite proposals for project funding in relation to conservation of genetic resources for food and agriculture 5](#_Toc184532796)

[Hardwood Matters 5](#_Toc184532797)

[Raising Trees and Shrubs from Seed – New Practice Guide from Forestry Commission 5](#_Toc184532798)

[Teagasc 2030 – Creating Knowledge for the Bio-Economy 6](#_Toc184532799)

[COST E53 conference 6](#_Toc184532800)

[Policy makers in forestry rely on personal contacts 6](#_Toc184532801)

[MCPFE publications 7](#_Toc184532802)

[MSc Online programmes: new student intake 7](#_Toc184532803)

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# New COFORD Research Programme Manager

Alistair Pfeifer has joined COFORD as Research Programme Manager with responsibility for the funded research programme. Alistair brings a wealth of experience in research management and appraisal to the post. His most recent role was head of research and environment in Coillte, where he was also responsible for certification. Prior to being involved in management he was in charge of tree improvement research in Coillte and before that in the Forest Service. Alistair holds forestry degrees from UCD and was also external examiner for the forestry course for a number of years.

COFORD Director Eugene Hendrick, in welcoming the appointment said “I am very pleased that COFORD has been able to fill the Research Programme Manager post with a person of Alistair Pfeifer’s experience and calibre. I see this appointment as a key part of COFORD’s contribution to innovation and development in the forestry sector in Ireland. We have a busy programme ahead in 2008, with new calls for proposals, a large number of new projects beginning, and our services to the forestry sector and the public continually expanding. Alistair will be key to ensuring delivery of the COFORD programme in a coherent and cost-effective manner.”

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# ForestEnergy 2007 seminar

COFORD will be hosting a seminar to present the findings of the ForestEnergy 2007 programme. Entitled ***Quality-based forest fuel supply chains – the ForestEnergy 2007 programme***, the event will take place on 12 December 2007 at the Mullingar Park Hotel, Co Westmeath. [Click here to download registration form.](http://www.coford.ie/iopen24/pub/pub/fe07_programme_121207.pdf)

COFORD’s ForestEnergy2006 programme, held in collaboration with Teagasc, focussed on first thinning for the production of wood chip fuel. Detailed results of all aspects of the programme are available in the COFORD report [*Harvesting and Processing Forest Biomass for Energy Production in Ireland. The ForestEnergy 2006 programme*](http://www.coford.ie/iopen24/pub/product_info.php?cPath=1175&products_id=966605).

ForestEnergy2007 builds on the 2006 programme and addresses how to harvest and store wood fuel of acceptable moisture content, for sale as wood chip and firewood. The programme encompasses wood chip and firewood harvesting, processing, stacking and storage trials, as well as research on moisture content variation in standing trees over the year.

Storage trials examining the length of time required to dry wood to acceptable moisture content are in place at forest sites and at a specialised experiment site where moisture loss is being determined by using large metal bins placed on weigh cells. Drying rate is being examined in relation to measured meteorological variables at the site. This will provide a better insight into the length of drying required to reach specified end use requirements, using different assortments and covering treatments. In the trial, the wood stored in bins is being compared with the same assortments stored in the forest in large stacks. This is ongoing research with preliminary results now becoming available. The seminar will showcase the main findings of the ForestEnergy 2007 programme, as well as the latest information from Sustainable Energy Ireland on new supports for bioenergy implementation in Ireland. The programme includes a visit to the wood storage trial site as well as the following presentations:

* Overview of the ForestEnergy 2007 programme - *Tom Kent, Waterford Institute of Technology*
* Harvesting and chipping systems - results from the 2007 trials - *Pieter D Kofman, Danish Forestry Extension*
* Moisture changes during on-site seasoning in 2007 - *Enda Coates, Waterford Institute of Technology*
* Preliminary results of physical and chemical analysis of wood fuel - *Sean Kelly and Sarah Cooley, Waterford Institute of Technology*
* Preliminary results of the effects of storage on the moisture content of roundwood - *Pieter D. Kofman, Danish Forestry Extension*
* New supports for bioenergy implementation in Ireland - *Pearse Buckley, Sustainable Energy Ireland*
* At 14:00 depart for wood storage trial at Rochfordbridge. Chipping of the contents of one bin by Musmax drum chipper from Clare Wood Chip Ltd into a Bord na Móna walking floor truck.

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# Wood biomass workshop extended to two days

Due to popular demand, and the level of interest in this important sector, COFORD's wood biomass harvesting and supply chain workshop has been extended to two days. Opportunities will also be provided for people who have already attended the one-day version, to attend day two only. [Click here to download registration form.](http://www.coford.ie/iopen24/pub/pub/december2007.pdf)

The programme for day 1 remains:

* Introduction to wood biomass
* Overview of supply chain
* Wood biomass harvesting, transport and storage
* The Ten Commandments of wood biomass usage
* Quantification (conversion factors such as tonnes, m3, kWhrs, GJ, etc.)
* Irish and Danish case studies
* Biomass supply contract preparation

The programme for day 2 is:

* Overview of other biofuels, such as willow short rotation coppice and miscanthus
* Silviculture of willow short rotation coppice
* Establishment and harvesting of willow short rotation coppice
* Production of wood pellets
* Quality requirements for wood pellets
* Delivery of wood pellets
* Boiler types
* Economic appraisal of wood boiler solutions

The first of these workshops will take place on 10-11 December at Mullingar Park Hotel, with a repeat of day 2 only on 13 December at the same venue for those who have already attended previous day 1 workshops. If you would like to attend, please email: info@coford.ie or phone 01-2130725. The cost is €250 for the two-day option, and €100 for the day-2 only option. Please note that classes are restricted to 20 participants so it is essential to book as soon as possible.

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# Published papers from COFORD-funded projects

## Estimates of decay rates of components of coarse woody debris in thinned Sitka spruce forests

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## Summary

The requirement for reporting of changes in forest carbon (C) stocks under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and to the Kyoto Protocol has underlined a need for information on the deadwood pool. As the coarse woody debris (CWD) component of the deadwood pool falls outside the remit of most C-stock change models used in reporting processes, this study set out to develop a methodology to evaluate the C-content of CWD stocks in the main Irish forest type (Sitka spruce plantations). In order to calculate CWD stocks without information on thinning/harvesting dates, the development of a system of classifying CWD into five decay classes (DCs) is presented. DCs were based mainly on visual characteristics linked to the degree of decomposition. Samples were taken from thinned first rotation plantations to establish the basic density loss associated with each DC. Stocks, including logs, stumps and roots, ranged from 5.1 to 13.1 t C ha-l in forests aged 30 and 33 years, respectively. Decay rates for both stump and log material were 0.0592 and 0.0466 g cm-3 a-1, respectively.

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[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# Finding the “Ideal” Christmas Tree

Many people think that the most difficult aspect of selecting the “ideal” Christmas tree is selecting from all those trees at the sales lot. However, the problem actually starts several years earlier when the grower needs to select the seed source he will grow to try and meet the customer’s specifications.

Towards this end a new joint project between COFORD, the Irish Christmas Tree Growers’ Association and researchers in Coillte was started in the spring of 2007. Building on an earlier trial that tested a range of Irish, Danish and US noble fir (*Abies procera*) seed sources, this trial aims to test some of the best Danish noble fir seed sources, known for their good growth habit and blue foliage colour.

A series of 5 trials have been established with material from 11 different seed sources. The trees will be grown under the cultural conditions used by each grower. The aim of the trial is to evaluate a range of Danish sources under Irish climatic and cultural conditions as well as to inform Christmas tree growers of the different types of trees that can be simply produced by using different sources of seed.

For more information on this project, contact Dr David Thompson (email: david.thompson@coillte.ie).

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# Carbon Corner

## All roads lead to Bali

The UN Climate Conference, which convenes at Bali this week, will start the negotiation process to find a successor to the Kyoto Protocol. A successor agreement, as far as the EU is concerned, needs to deepen cuts in greenhouse gas emissions far more than the current 5% level agreed in the protocol. Earlier this year Europe took a bold step by announcing a commitment to cut emissions by 20% by 2020, with reductions of 30% envisaged if other Parties agree to take on similar ambitious commitments.

So the agenda at Bali will be to agree a roadmap to achieve deep and lasting cuts in emissions of greenhouse gases among developed countries. Developing countries, such as Brazil and China, will also be expected to at least begin along the pathway of lessening emissions, even if actual cuts are not foreseen in the period immediately after 2012. One option that is open to developing countries with extensive areas of virgin forest, the likes of Brazil and Indonesia, is to reduce their levels of emissions from deforestation.

Without doubt, reductions in the rate of deforestation in developing countries have the potential to deliver a substantial reduction in the rate of increase of atmospheric carbon dioxide. Estimates from the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change put the contribution of deforestation at anywhere between 15 and 22% of annual global greenhouse gas emissions. Most of the emissions arise in five to six countries, which account for 80% plus of the global release.

Deforestation is one of the main agenda items at Bali, and it is an issue that most parties agree needs to be tacked urgently, with pilot projects at the national level being favoured by the EU. In a parallel development, the World Bank is seeking to create a Forest Carbon Partnership Facility that would fund capacity building in monitoring and assessment of emissions from deforestation among a large number of developing countries, as well as a pilot carbon purchase fund, involving a far smaller number of developing countries. What this would involve is rewarding countries that reduce their emissions from deforestation below an agreed baseline.

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# InnovaWood news

On Friday 30 November a number of calls for proposals were launched. These calls are part of the Seventh Framework Programme for research. The main themes of research include agriculture and food, energy, materials and the environment including climate change. Have a look at the document provided by InnovaWood which summarises research opportunities for the forest-based industries sector. [To download the document click here.](http://www.coford.ie/iopen24/pub/pub/newsletter/Volume7/COFORD-supplement-December07.pdf)

## Event Announcement

Information Session: Forest based industries sector - opportunities in FP7 for 2008. This meeting includes activities from Themes: 2- Food, Agriculture, Fisheries & Biotechnology; 4. Nanosciences, Nanotechnologies, Materials and new Production Technologies; 5. Energy; 6. Environment (including Climate Change). Speakers include Dr Imelda Lambkin, National Co-ordinator for FP7 in Ireland; Dr John Dardis, FP7 National Contact Point Theme 2- Food, Agriculture, Fisheries & Biotechnology; Dr Dagmar Meyer, National Contact Point for the Marie Curie Programme. It takes place at the Heritage Hotel, Portlaoiseon 18 December 2007. If you would like to attend this event, send an email to charles.harper@innovawood.com

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food invite proposals for

## project funding in relation to conservation of genetic resources for food and agriculture

The Advisory Committee on Genetic Resources invites proposals for funding in relation to the conservation of genetic resources for food and agriculture in Ireland during 2008 and it is expected that a budget of €150,000 will be provided for the scheme. While in general proposals funded under this programme have been predominantly in the agricultural area, over the past couple of years some forestry projects have been considered and in 2004 a project on the “Conservation of Veteran Irish Hardwood Trees” which was submitted by Dr Gerry Douglas (Teagasc) was funded under this programme. This project started in June 2004 and was completed in May 2006.

Anyone who wishes to submit appropriate projects relating to this programme should do so immediately. Projects considered for support under this scheme should ideally conclude within a twelve to eighteen month time-period and cover one or more of the primary policy objectives as set out under project conditions.

For further information on any aspect of this programme or to receive an application form please contact: Helen Mulligan, Crop Protection & Safety Division, Maynooth Business Campus, Maynooth, Co Kildare by 15 December 2007. Phone 01 5053443 or email: Helen.Mulligan@agriculture.gov.ie

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# Hardwood Matters

Since early in 2005 when the first Hardwood Matters was published, the interest and demand has grown considerably with each issue. The next Hardwood Matters is due to be published in January 2008. People or organisations that have broadleaves/hardwood timber for sale, whether they are a first thinning or a final clearfell, are invited to submit entries for inclusion in the next issue. Similarly if you have hardwood timber requirements please contact us. The service is free and the publication is distributed widely across the forestry and processing sectors. Details of material for inclusion in Issue No 7 should reach the COFORD office by Friday 4 January 2008. For further information contact John Fennessy at 01 2130725 or email: [john.fennessy@coford.ie](mailto:john.fennessy@coford.ie). [Click here to download previous issues and the catalogue listing form.](http://www.coford.ie/iopen24/pub/index.php?cPath=1179)

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# Raising Trees and Shrubs from Seed – New Practice Guide from Forestry Commission

“Growing a few trees from seed is a relatively easy and extremely rewarding hobby,” according to the new Practice Guide from the Forestry Commission prepared by Peter Gosling. This booklet is a very useful guide for anyone planning to raise plants from seed. This practice guide is aimed principally at people interested in raising small numbers of trees to plant in the garden, however, in describing some of the basic properties of tree seed, principles on handling, and explaining how to avoid or overcome common problems, this guide will be a useful reference for all. The guide opens with a section on understanding tree seed and this is followed with an outline of how flowers and fruit develop. There are also sections on collection, handling and processing seed, seed storage, seed dormancy and pre-treatment of seed, an introduction to vegetative propagation, and sowing seed and raising seedlings.

The guide concludes with a section on transplanting to final growing position. It also suggests a further reading list and the appendices provide information on storage and a pre-treatment summary, pre-treatment of hard seeded species and information on pre-treatment of deeply- and shallowly-dormant seeds.

The publication is a must for anyone wishing to learn about forest tree seed. It costs £5.50 and is available from the Forestry Commission, 231 Corstrophine Road, Edinburgh, EH12 7AT, email: publications@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# Teagasc 2030 – Creating Knowledge for the Bio-Economy

The Teagasc 2030 Foresight Project was launched in December 2006 with the following objectives:

* Develop a broadly shared vision for the long-term future of agri-food and rural economy and for Teagasc as a leading provider of science-based knowledge to the sector.
* Identify the technologies, research and innovation management strategies required to underpin the development of an innovative, competitive and sustainable sector in the short, medium and long term.
* Identify the strategies and mechanisms required to maximise the impact of training and technology transfer.
* Build the strategic capabilities of Teagasc as a science-based knowledge organisation and develop a culture of continuous renewal.

To date the process has addressed the first objective which relates to how Teagasc sees the industry it services in 2030. The main outcome is a set of five scenarios outlining different perspectives on the future agri-food and related sectors and a vision statement synthesising the key messages of these five scenarios. The next phase is an initial output of current management deliberations which will be presented as a Five Year Roadmap at the next (Seventh) Foresight Panel Workshop scheduled to take place on 15 January 2008. With the completion of this workshop Teagasc will have finalised the formal parts of the Foresight exercise and addressed all the objectives.

Some critical steps will remain to be addressed in the overall process:

* Drafting of the final Teagacs 2030 Report.
* Completing further internal and external consultation on the draft Report.
* Preparing an International Foresight Conference in May 2008 to launch the Report.
* Building on the Foresight competencies established in the course of the project and implementing new strategies.

For further information on the Teagasc Foresight Process and to view copies of the five scenarios visit: [www.tnet.teagasc.ie/foresight public/index.asp](http://www.tnet.teagasc.ie/foresight%20public/index.asp)

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# COST E53 conference

Gordon Knaggs recently attended the first conference of COST Action E53 conference in Warsaw, Poland. Papers presented at the conference included topics such as Sitka spruce, drying, and grading which would be of interest to Irish wood processors. The full proceedings are available on the COST E53 website at [www.coste53.net/](http://www.coste53.net/)

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# Policy makers in forestry rely on personal contacts

There is no common EU forest policy. In order to safeguard its interests, the forest sector in Europe need to communicate effectively with EU level policy makers and representatives of other sectors and stakeholder groups. A doctoral dissertation ‘Communication in forest policy decision-making in Europe: a study on communication processes between policy, science and the public’ by Gerben Janse indicates that personal communication with peers is the most important source of information for forest policy-makers. It was also found out that the excess of information and complicated websites and inaccessible databases do not serve or attract the policy-makers.

As regards to improving communication between science and policy, both policy-makers and scientists agree that scientific information should be presented in shorter and easier to comprehend formats. Scientists should be involved more in policy advisory meetings and more personal contacts between scientists and policy-makers are called for. The study also points out that policy makers’ willingness to involve themselves in public participation processes depends on their political interests, prior experience with public participation, and on their trust in the facilitators of the process. All in all, successful communication with policy-makers requires relationships and networks based on mutual trust.

Internal communication in the forest sector at the European (i.e. mainly EU) level is generally well developed, but the desired strengthening of communication with other sectors and the public at large is perceived as difficult. Due to varying expectations within the sector, more active exchange of best practices in forest communication between national as well as European level actors and increased coordination of communication efforts is desired.

The dissertation is a summary of four studies by Gerben Janse and they were conducted at the European Forest Institute. They are available at <http://www.metla.fi/dissertationes/df48.htm>. For more information contact Gerben Janse, Policy Advisor, Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF), email: gerben.janse@cepf-eu.org

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# MCPFE publications

The Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe publications are available in pdf format on http://www.mcpfe.org/publications/pdf.

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# MSc Online programmes: new student intake

Napier University’s online MSc degree programmes in Timber Engineering and Timber Industry Management have been live since early autumn with students now studying from various locations across the globe. These programmes seek to meet the need for suitably qualified staff within the timber industry by developing the diverse range of skills of those that are already in, or would like to enter, the industry.

The introduction of Eurocode 5 in the near future will create a further layer of opportunity for those engineers who choose to work with timber as a construction material. The MSc Timber Engineering is one of the first degree programmes available which covers Eurocode 5. The course is accredited by both the Institution of Civil Engineers and the Institution of Structural Engineers as meeting the requirements for Further Learning for a chartered engineer under the provisions of UK-SPEC.

Students can register for the courses until just before the programme start (February 2008), but prospective students are advised to apply soon. The courses are being offered by the School of Engineering and the Built Environment at Napier University full-time and part-time on campus in Edinburgh and in the new distance learning format.

For more information please contact the programme leaders: MSc Timber Engineering: Prof. Abdy Kermani (email: [a.kermani@napier.ac.uk](mailto:a.kermani@napier.ac.uk)); MSc Timber Industry Management: Mr John Wood (email: [jb.wood@napier.ac.uk](mailto:jb.wood@napier.ac.uk)). More information is available on the Napier University website (http://www.napier.ac.uk/prospectivestudents/postgraduate/Pages/default.aspx/default.asp) and on the CTE website (<http://cte.napier.ac.uk/courses_p.php>).

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)