

THE *Irish Forester*

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIETY OF IRISH FORESTERS

SUMMER 2010

Solid performance by forestry and forest products sectors during recession

The forestry and forest products sectors have performed well over the past six months despite the worst recession in living memory. The afforestation targets may not reach the 10,000 ha target as agreed in the 2009 Revised Programme for Government but it is likely to exceed recent annual programmes which dipped to 6,000 ha.

The strong arguments put forward to government by forestry groups to support a viable forestry programme are bearing fruit. COFORD – the National Council for Forest Research and Development – has secured €3.0 million funding while Sean Connick, Minister of State with responsibility for forestry has reopened roading grants for harvesting roads.

This move was absolutely essential to ensure access to first thinning now coming on the market from growers – mainly farmers – who established forests in the early 1990s.

Those who predicted that timber prices would fall have been pleasantly surprised in recent months. The slump in prices, from late 2008 and the first half of 2009 has been reversed. Prices have risen since late last year and dramatic increases have been recorded over the past two months.

Standing prices have increased for logs in the 7-14cm top diameter category. Private sale prices, which averaged between €5.00 and €8.73/m³ in 2009 have increased to between €7.50 and €14.00/m³ during the months of March and May this year.

Medium sized logs between 0.225 and 0.374 m³ increased from around €25.00 to €35.00/m³ between the quarters January March 2009 and same period 2010. Large sawlog prices, were between €27.00 and €35.00/m³ in 2009 had increased to between €41.00 and €48.00/m³ during the quarter January–March 2010.

While official data have yet to be recorded for May, buyers and consultants are in agreement that prices for standing sales of boxwood material (medium sized logs) have increased to €45.00/m³, which equates to around €70.00/m³ for roadside sales.

Larger logs around 20 cm top diameter and upwards are commanding prices of close to €70.00/m³ standing and €90.00/m³ at roadside. As a result, some sawmills are paying over €100.00/m³ for delivered in large logs at the moment.

How long these prices will last is uncertain. The increase in timber prices is not just confined to Ireland. Log prices have increased internationally particularly in North America, the Nordic countries central Europe and the UK.

There is huge competition for a limited supply of logs among sawmills at the moment. It is important that private growers carry out first thinning and produce increased volumes. The return of roading grants together with excellent prices are strong incentives to thin. Sawmills and panel board mills along with the burgeoning wood energy sector are proving to be lucrative markets for growers at a time when other markets for a broad range of products are dwindling.

Role of AIFC

The Association of Irish Forestry Consultants (AIFC), affiliated to the Society of Irish Foresters, represents the forest consultancy profession in Ireland. Members are located throughout Ireland and now have a client base of over 1,500 forest owners.

According to Sean Lenihan, AIFC Chairman, to become a member of the association “applicants must satisfy strict criteria regarding qualifications, experience and professional indemnity insurance”. In addition, in order to retain their membership of the group “consultants must undertake Continued Professional Development (CPD) via courses, field days, lectures and study tours to attain a specified number of points annually”.

AIFC members come from diverse backgrounds in forestry. “Some of us have worked for the State forestry sector; others have worked for private forestry companies and some in forest education and research,” he said. “We have pooled our experience and by drawing on the better aspects of our previous careers, listening to our customers and trying hard to be creative, we have succeeded in attracting satisfied customers all over Ireland.”

Seán Connick, Minister of State with responsibility for forestry, recently launched AIFC’s new website in the Forest Service HQ, Johnstown Castle, Wexford. The Minister said he was delighted that one of his first official forestry engagements was to launch the website for the forest consultancy profession in Ireland. He said that the AIFC had a vital role to play in the development of the industry in Ireland and he complimented them on their new website. Seán Lenihan told the Minister that the aim of www.aifc.ie was “to make the news page on the website the first port of call for foresters, growers, the press and other stakeholders who needed the latest information on developments in the industry.”



Minister of State, Sean Connick recently launched the Association of Irish Forestry Consultants website in Johnstown Castle.

Pictured with Minister Connick are: Donal Fitzpatrick, Secretary AIFC; John Gillespie, Assistant Secretary Department of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries; Bridgenea Nolan, Principal Officer Forest Service, Fergus Moore, Divisional Inspector Forest Service and Sean Lenihan, Chairman AIFC.

Clash of the ash in Jenkinstown



Richard Costelloe, hurley maker and Toddy Radford, Teagasc, listen attentively as Mick Power explains the steps in hurley making.

When Mick Power, Coillte district manager, told the large attendance at our recent field day in Kilkenny that ash is the most valuable timber in the world, few would dispute this claim. The pity is that there isn't more of it around as Ireland relies heavily on imported ash for hurley making. There is an annual demand now for 350,000 hurleys, and according to Society member Mick, at least 80% of supply is imported.

Mick led this interesting field day, taking the group through all stages of production from growing to the final stage where the hurley is made after quality trees are carefully felled in the forest and transported to the sawmill where they are planked. Hurley making, according to Mick, is a cottage industry with great potential. There are 230 hurley manufacturers in Ireland.

Ash timber is not confined to hurley making and fuel wood. Commercial ash lengths are valued in many countries. In time, an industry may grow in tandem with hurley making in Ireland so that good ash lengths can be converted into furniture and other high added value end uses, including picture framing, as suggested by Gerhardt Gallagher.

Society goes north

Our second field day of 2010 was held in Fermanagh and Tyrone on Friday 14 May. At Colebrook Park, prior to a tour of his estate, Lord Brookeborough welcomed the Society and emphasised the importance of trees and deer for the economic survival of the estate. John Hetherington and Kate Crane then led a tour of the estate.

In the afternoon, we were guests of the Forest Service Northern Ireland at Favour Royal Forest, Co Tyrone. Noel Melanaphy led a visit to St Patrick's Chair and Well where the importance of recreational and social policy in today's forestry was discussed. Colin Reilly led a tour of an Ancient Woodland Site, which it is proposed to convert, from its current conifer crop, to native species.



*At Favour Royal Forest, St Patrick's Chair, Altadavan
Back: Bill Wright, Noel Melanaphy, Willie McKenna.
Front: Trevor Wilson and Ken Ellis.*



*Back: John Mc Loughlin and Ken Ellis
Front: Bill Wright, Lord Brookeborough, Donal Whelan,
John Heatherington, Kate Crean*

Window on the past – the class of 1937-40



The newsletter plans to feature class photographs of the various groups, which graduated in forestry over the years. This issue features the class of 1937-40 in Avondale. Front row: TJ Briody; MC Rigney; Miss M Devane, Matron; DJ Nyhan; J Horgan. Back row: WJ Breslin, Forester in Charge; JF Ryan; JA Conway; DJ Maguire; AJ Hanahoe; PP O'Grady; DJ O'Sullivan; A Grant, Superintendent.

Society welcomes new members

Three new membership categories introduced at 2010 AGM

The lifeblood of the Society is its membership. We welcome new members and encourage foresters and those with an interest in trees and forests to join the Society, which now has a membership in excess of 650.

Traditionally there have been three types of membership available to those wishing to join the Society of Irish Foresters. These were, Technical Membership for qualified professional foresters, Associate Membership for those with an interest in trees and forestry, and Student Membership for students of forestry pursuing a recognised course on forestry at third level.

This arrangement has served the Society well over many years. However, the profession of forestry and the broader industry has undergone significant change since the Society was founded in 1942. These changes are reflected in the much wider curricula available to students and also the wider range of employment opportunities.

In order to adequately cater for this “broader church” the Society of Irish Foresters introduced a revised range of membership categories at the 2010 AGM. These changes make it possible for those qualified in arboriculture, landscape management and ecology to attain Technical Membership of the Society in their own specialist field. Associate and Student membership will be unchanged.

There are now four categories of Technical Membership as follows:

- MSIF (Forestry) abbreviated to MSIF (For.)
- MSIF (Arboriculture) abbreviated to MSIF (Arbor.)
- MSIF (Landscape Management) abbreviated to MSIF (Land. Mgt.)
- MSIF (Ecology) abbreviated to MSIF (Ecol.)

We welcome the following 24 new members:
Technical – Findan Cox, Eamon Drohan, Brian Kennedy, Dave Cusack, Ken Joyce, Enda Keane, Noel Lane, Finian McEvoy, Garrett Mullooly, Paul Murray, Joe Noone, Myles O'Malley, Pat Peters, Mark Ryan, Richard Sweetnam.
Associate – Andrew Fitzgerald, Kay Maguire, Paul McMahan, Gerry O'Reilly, John Phelan, Angela Wallace, Brendan Waugh.
Student – Gerry Blake, Justin Good.

Presentation of Society Augustine Henry Awards



Society President Pat Farrington presented the 2010 Augustine Henry Memorial Awards to Nicholas Mockler, Waterford IT and Patrick Moore, Galway-Mayo IT at the Society field day in Jenkinstown Park last April. The University College Dublin prize winner, Melanie de Wit, was unable to attend the presentation. The annual awards are presented to forestry students who gained the highest marks in their final year examinations.

Winner of Society Innovation Award



Pat Farrington, President, Society of Irish Foresters with Batt O'Keeffe, Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Innovation who presented the Society of Irish Foresters Innovation Award to Enda Keane and Garret Mullooly, Treemetrics Ltd. The company received the award for providing innovative solutions for optimising value recovery in forestry. The company also received the prestigious Schweighofer Prize in Vienna with their partners in Freiburg University earlier this year.

Society study tour to Bavaria

This year's study tour will visit Bavaria, in southeastern Germany. Bavaria is heavily forested (22% of the land area) and holds 30% of Germany's timber reserves. In 2008, Bavaria's forest industry had sales of €24.8 billion and employed 205,000 people. The tour will commence on Sunday, 12th September, departing Dublin airport with Aer Lingus at 07.20 hrs and arriving in Munich at 10.50 hrs. The return flight is on Thursday, 16th September, departing Munich with Aer Lingus at 20.40 hrs and arriving in Dublin at 22.10 hrs. The cost (€900 or €1,100 (single room)) includes flights, accommodation, meals and coach transport. Foresters from the Society of Bavarian Foresters will accompany the group for the duration of the tour.

RDS-Forest Service Irish Forestry Awards



Details of the RDS-Forest Service Irish Forestry Awards were announced recently in Donadea Forest Park. The 2010 awards were launched by Sean Connick, Minister of State with responsibility for forestry (above, left) pictured with James Bennett, Vice-Chairman RDS Committee of Agriculture, and Ken Ellis, Society of Irish Foresters.

Summary of 2010 Events

12 - 16 September
Annual Study Tour – Germany

24 September
Field Day – Co. Galway

7 October
Annual Seán Mac Bride
Forestry Lecture – UCD.

Forestry Review under way

The forestry review is now well underway. Launched earlier this year, the review comprises the following three groups, all chaired by Department personnel:

- National forestry policy review;
- Funding of forestry schemes review; and
- Coillte review

There was an excellent response to the review and 51 submissions were received. The Association of Irish Forestry Consultants made a comprehensive submission.

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