
Introduction

Welcome to the *ITGA Forestry and Timber Yearbook 2010*. We continue in this edition to provide the definitive resource for information on the sector and also to highlight the benefits of membership of the Association.

The industry has been under pressure over the last twelve months and has not been immune to the economic pressures facing the country as a whole. The case for forestry, however, is stronger than ever in the light of its role in employment and the increasingly important function of forestry in reducing atmospheric carbon dioxide. This has a real benefit in reducing the cost of complying with international greenhouse gas emissions targets.

ITGA is committed to keeping forestry at the forefront of government policy and to ensure continued commitment to the progressive development of the industry. To that end it is positive to see the highlighting of forestry in the renewed Programme for Government targeting an annual 10,000 ha planting programme in the coming years. We welcome this commitment and will work to keep up the profile of the industry at this level.

While we are experiencing pressure in timber markets and prices at present, the outlook for the future is positive, based on the fundamental demand drivers for wood and wood products.

Wood as a renewable source for energy will continue to grow as global pressure increases the need for balancing national carbon budgets under international protocols. In addition the world is experiencing historical lows in timber demand as the economic downturn has in turn led to a fall in demand for new housing. This cannot continue indefinitely and the ability of forest owners to continue to grow their forests during periods of low demand highlights the great benefit of growing trees while protecting against the worst aspects of economic cycles.

I would like to thank our members for their continued support to date. Without a strong membership we would not have been in a position to make our voice heard where national policy decisions are made. Members should never lose sight of the need for this activity in addition to the regular member



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Chairman
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Association

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services such as this yearbook, our website, our field days and newsletters as well as many other initiatives such as the roundwood price database and our model timber sales security system. Your continued membership is a vital element in funding all of these services.

ITGA is also making great strides towards offering forestry growers a choice when it comes to certification of sustainable forest management. We look forward to a draft PEFC certification standard being issued in the coming months with a view to having PEFC as a real option for growers in 2010.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank the many organisations we have worked with over the past year, including the Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Coillte, COFORD, the Society of Irish Foresters, Crann, UCD Forestry Department, the IFA, Teagasc and many others. The co-operation shared with the many groups is one of the positive aspects of the industry as a whole.

I would also like to thank the committee and executive of ITGA for their continued hard work to ensure members interests are served and I would also like to thank Rory Greene for his past contribution to secretarial services and wish him well in the future.

Our forest resource has a bright future and a valuable, sustainable contribution to make to the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of Ireland. Let's keep it growing and keep the ITGA growing along with it.



Brendan Lacey
Chairman
Irish Timber Growers Association