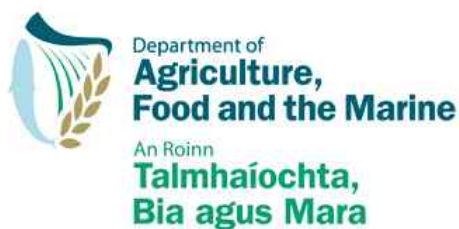


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**PRESS RELEASE**

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25 January, 2012

12/12

**MCENTEE ANNOUNCES RE-OPENING OF  
BROADLEAF THINNING SCHEME**

The Minister of State with responsibility for forestry at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Shane McEntee TD, today announced the re-opening of the Broadleaf Thinning Scheme.

Making the announcement Minister McEntee commented *“I am pleased to announce the re-opening of this important forestry support measure that was temporarily suspended just before Christmas. Although aware of the importance of the Scheme to the forestry industry, the suspension was necessary to enable my Department to take stock of its overall financial position following the welcome allocation for forestry announced in the 2012 Budget. I am happy to say there are no changes to the existing Scheme, which provides payments of €750 per hectare, and it is now open to new applicants. Processing of applications already in the system at the time of the suspension will resume immediately”*.

Minister McEntee added *“I am fully aware of the importance of this Scheme having visited woodlands and woodland owners who have availed of these grants. The scheme allows broadleaf forest owners to thin, manage and add value to their plantations, while also supplying much needed raw material to the emerging wood-fuel sector, an important and growing enterprise within our rural communities. I am also keenly aware having helped launch the ‘From ash to clash’ DVD recently that hurley makers require ash stands to be thinned early so they will grow on to supply quality ash for hurleys to enable Ireland to be self sufficient in hurley ash within the next few years. I have been aware of the concerns expressed about the future of the Scheme and am delighted that the Government’s commitment to forestry evidenced in the Budget has placed me in a position to be able to make this announcement”*.

**Note for Editors:**

The aim of the Scheme is to stimulate the improvement, protection and development of woodlands and forests for a range of functions, including healthy tree growth, landscape enhancement, soil and water protection, and as a provider of raw material to growing indigenous industries.

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