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**PRESS RELEASE**

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**CONNICK HIGHLIGHTS NATIONAL TREE DAY AS HE LAUNCHES  
MODEL TIMBER SALES SYSTEM**

Seán Connick, TD, Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food with responsibility for forestry, this week launched a Model Timber Sales System aimed at private timber growers. The Model System was developed by the Irish Timber Growers Association (ITGA) with funding from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

Minister of State Connick also highlighted National Tree Day, a day specifically set aside to remind the general public and, in particular, children, about the importance of trees and the enjoyment that can be derived from visiting forests and appreciating woodland settings. The Minister of State gave further examples of the multi-functional nature of forestry, including the provision of environmental benefits and recreational activities, carbon storage, a source of renewable energy and commercial timber production.

In relation to commercial timber production, Minister of State Connick commented *“The development of this model timber sales system, which I launched this week, underlines the ongoing initiative displayed by the forest sector to address issues within the sector. Such a model sales system will assist private forest growers when selling their timber and is therefore a useful addition to the whole process”*.

The tracking, accounting and security of timber sales from the forest to the sawmill or other end user is seen as an important issue for both timber buyers and sellers in the sector. With the majority of new planting being undertaken by private landowners, mainly farmers, it was

considered that a robust system to facilitate the movement and tracking of timber loads would be helpful.

Welcoming the Model Timber Sales System developed by the ITGA to address this need, Minister of State Connick said *“In view of the increase in planting by the private sector in recent years, this model system provides a useful template for plantation owners to track and account for their timber when this timber is being harvested and sold. The importance of this development should be seen in the context of the volume of timber being moved every year with over 2.4 million cubic metres of timber, from public and private forests, harvested in Ireland in 2009. This model timber sales system will go some way towards ensuring that private growers have a system readily available to allow them to maximise the return from their timber sales”*.

The Minister of State noted that stakeholder consultation and testing had been undertaken which showed that this system can operate successfully in the field and is capable of immediate implementation. The system utilises modern communication technology by using text messaging to notify forest owners when their timber is being collected. A docket system with a unique identification numbering method is another feature of the model system. He also noted that the system has been designed for easy adaptation if practical experience of its implementation warrants such changes and that it is designed to be compatible with timber certification protocols and sustainable forest management methods.

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