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PRESS RELEASE

192/10

**CONNICK ANNOUNCES FINANCIAL APPROVALS FOR
AUTUMN FORESTRY PLANTING**

Seán Connick TD, Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food with responsibility for forestry, today announced “*my Department will immediately commence issuing financial approvals, for a further 1,500 hectares of new forestry planting, for the current autumn planting season. I am pleased to announce this in view of the very encouraging planting levels to date this year.*”

The Minister of State made the announcement at the presentation of the 2010 RDS/Forest Service Irish Forestry Awards function held in Russborough House, Co. Wicklow.

Presenting the Awards, the Minister of State highlighted the annual Forestry Awards as a means of recognising, and rewarding, the efforts of farmer foresters and other forest owners on the management of their forests in line with the basic principles of Sustainable Forest Management and added, “*the prizewinners this evening are all managing their plantations in a very effective manner and exemplify the commitment and effort of so many forest owners*”.

Acknowledging the Royal Dublin Society’s long history of supporting forestry in Ireland, he added “*The organisation and promotion of this prestigious awards scheme, a longstanding partnership between the RDS and my Department, is evidence of the ongoing contribution of both parties towards the development of forestry.*”

As in previous years, there were two main categories for which awards were presented - the 'Farm Forestry category' and the 'Bio-Diverse Forest/Woodlands' category. As part of the awards scheme, the judging panel also had the discretion to make a 'Special Judge's award' in recognition of outstanding achievements by individuals within the industry.

The winner of the Farm Forestry category in 2010 was Ms. Anne O'Reilly, Belturbet, Co. Cavan, with 2nd place going to Mr. Aleck Tong, Edenderry, Co Offaly.

Declan and Yvonne Foley, Beltra, Co. Sligo were the winners in the Bio-diverse Forest/Woodland category, with 2nd place awarded to Michael Kim McCall, Kilcullen, Co. Kildare.

The 'Special Judges Award' was made to Mr. Martin Murphy, Cahermurphy, Kilmihill, Co. Clare, in recognition of his willingness to pass on his expertise and encouragement of other growers and potential growers. Nominating Mr. Murphy for the award, the judges noted that he does all the work himself including planting, fertilising, weed control, brashing, thinning, pruning and road making, and is now a very accomplished forest operator.

Minister of State Connick noted that, in addition to the winners of the specific categories, special recognition was given by the judges to the best provincial entrants, namely, Mr Victor Dunne of Gorey, Co. Wexford in Leinster, Mr Matt Fogarty of Nenagh, Co. Tipperary in Munster, Mr. Joseph Tracey of Claudy, Co. Derry in Ulster and Mr Michael Boyle of Foxford, Co. Mayo in Connacht.

The Minister of State thanked all of the forest owners who participated in the competition and the judges for their adjudication of the entries.

21 October, 2010

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