



Realising our forest potential



FORESTRY AND TIMBER YEARBOOK 2015



Time will tell how successful 2014 was in terms of performance in the forestry and forest products sector. If activity is a criterion for measuring progress, then it was a successful year – certainly a busy year.

After almost 60 years the sector has a new Forestry Act which will influence forestry development well into this century. The long awaited Forest Policy Review, Forests, Products and People and the new Forestry Programme 2015-2020 will shape forestry over the foreseeable future, especially afforestation, roading, timber mobility and research. The programme has a number of innovative measures although the annual afforestation programme over the six years is disappointing, averaging only 7,500ha. COFORD, the respected advisory body to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine has recommended an annual target of 15,000ha to achieve a viable forestry programme.

The need for more innovative and cohesive forestry research appeared in a number of initiatives during the year, culminating in a new Strategic Research Agenda for Forestry in Ireland 'Forest Research Ireland (FORI)' which was developed under the patronage of the COFORD Council Forest Research Working Group. Forest protection remained an issue during the year. Chalara fraxinea continues to threaten ash plantations and woodlands while the windblow of forests caused by Storm Darwin illustrates how vulnerable our forests are to wind damage. The ITGA played a major role in the Windblow Taskforce in assessing the damage and making proposals in dealing with the windblow aftermath. In addition, the association organised field days on how to manage storm damage and the reforestation that follows.

Timber growers and the wider industry acknowledge the association's role in these initiatives and we are encouraged by the high turnout at our field days and other events. This support is reflected in the pages of the yearbook through directory entries and advertising. This is appreciated by the ITGA Chairman, officers and the yearbook production team.

We look forward to your continued support.

Editor