

Introduction

The Irish Timber Growers Association have been representing timber growers in Ireland for more than 35 years. In that time we have seen a lot of change in the forestry sector from the significant expansion in private planting and forest management and, currently, a significant increase in private timber sales and wood mobilisation.

The work of the Association is often unseen but we have been engaged in campaigning on behalf of members. One of the most recent outcomes from this work has been the announcement in Budget 2016 of the removal of the High Earners Income Restriction on forestry income. This restores the exemption from income tax that applied before the introduction of the restriction and is the result of consistent engagement on the matter by ITGA over the last two years.

This is a very important development for forest owners as more members are engaged in timber sales from their woodlands. The Association also had a significant input during the passage of the Forestry Act 2014. We sought and secured many amendments to the legislation which recognised both the practice and principles applying to forest owners in the management of their woodlands which will support and encourage the future of Irish forestry and our members. This included the inclusion of a compensation provision where growers are refused a felling licence and the doubling of the period for felling licences from five to ten years with a provision for a further five year extension.

This is the 27th edition of the ITGA Forestry and Timber Yearbook and we are pleased to highlight many of the key aspects affecting timber growers today. Our membership services and activities have reflected the growing importance of timber sales management, as planting since the mid 1980s is producing both thinnings and mature timber.

We have recently engaged, in collaboration with the Forest Service, in a major expansion drive for the national Roundwood Price Database to be known as the Wood Price Quarterly initiative (WPQ). We encourage all our members to submit their price information in full confidence to the coordinator of the database Dr Aine Ni Dhubhain in UCD (roundwoodpricedatabase@ucd.ie). The database is an additional support to members which compliments the Template Master Tree Sales Agreement and the Timber Sales Dispatch System developed by ITGA over recent years.



*Brendan Lacey
Chairman
Irish Timber Growers Association*

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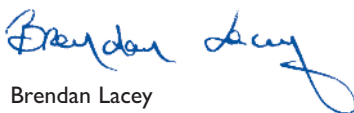
These initiatives were all designed to help members secure and protect their interests when selling wood from their forests and information on these supports is available in the yearbook or by contacting the ITGA directly (info@itga.ie).

Private timber sales are now reaching a stage where certification is becoming critical as the thresholds for the proportion of uncertified wood throughput permitted for certified processors is being reached. ITGA, as the national representative body for growers in this country, was the initiator for the PEFC forest certification process in Ireland and the PEFC Forest Management Standard is now entering its five year review period. We will continue to support the process and we recognise its importance in facilitating market access for growers to sell their product.

As a member representative organisation our focus for 2016 will continue to be on engagement with the many sectors within the industry with growers interests in mind. We will continue to support the implementation of the national Forest Policy Review Group report “Forest, Products and People, Ireland’s Forest Policy – a renewed vision” and welcome the continued support for the national forestry programme included in Budget 2016.

We will also continue with our information initiatives and publications. We have been very pleased with the continuing and increasing participation in our field days, reflecting both the growth of forestry and the relevance of the topics being highlighted. The field days are a real practical forum for growers to share and learn from each other’s experience. I am very grateful to those members who have hosted field days and look forward to many more of you doing the same in the future. The Association depends on the support of members for its continuing work on your behalf. I would like to thank the members for this continued support including the committee members and the Secretariat and Technical Director for their invaluable contributions through the year.

I would like to thank the editorial and production team of the Yearbook. Through 27 editions they have ensured it continues to inform and educate members as well as keeping its place as the definitive guide to the Irish forestry and timber industry.



Brendan Lacey
Chairman
Irish Timber Growers Association