

Minister Announces Grant Awards for Forest Research

The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Simon Coveney, TD, and Minister of State with Special Responsibility for Forestry Tom Hayes T.D., announced awards for research projects under the Department's **COFORD** competitive research funding programme. These awards arise from the Department's 2014 Call for Research proposals.

Minister of State Tom Hayes, TD, with responsibility for Forestry, said "*I particularly welcome the forestry research awards which, in a sense, are the first fruits of the 'Forest Research Ireland' strategic agenda that I launched in October, developed by a forest industry led group and which helped inform the COFORD part of this year's Research Call.*"

The five new forest research projects were awarded as follows;

Inventory and forecasting . Dr Niall Farrelly. Teagasc (UCD collaborator) €197,138.00.

The successful project will address forest growth and modelling efforts aimed at improving the private sector timber production forecast by addressing key components of the production forecasting chain. Methods will be explored to examine how inventory and management data from future management plans can be utilised as inputs to the national forecasting system. The proposal will also provide further information on accessibility of private plantations, management intentions of private forest owners in order to derive a more robust management regime for forecasting.

Cascade use of wood. Dr Ken Byrne. UL (UCD collaborator) €178,162.

The data and critical parameters identified in CASWOOD model will provide the foundation for an algorithm-based computer model of forest and forest-based products capable of forecasting alternative scenarios for material flows to optimize carbon storage and biomass while maximizing economic value. This will enable policy makers to develop more strategic, evidence-based guidelines for forest and forest-based resource management.

Windblow, risk, mitigation and influencing factors. Dr Aine NiDhubhain UCD (Teagasc collaborator) €178,162.

Ireland is subject to normal winter storms annually; occasionally severe storms are experienced. Storms result in the uprooting and breakage of trees, leading to negative economic consequences for forest owners. The aim of this project is to determine the factors that influence the risk of wind damage and generate a model that can be used to assess that risk. How thinning practice and forest design influences risk will also be investigated and recommendations provided as to how to minimise risk.

Modelling the potential airborne spread of ash die back disease. Dr Jon Yearsley. €67,091.

The project will develop a Lagrangian stochastic particle-tracking model that predicts the spatial risk of infection from a known source of *Hymenoscyphus pseudoalbidus* fungus (the infective agent of ash die-back disease, *Chalara fraxinea*). This model will combine the NAME model from the UK's Met Office with meteorological data from Met Eireann and biological details of *H. pseudoalbidus*'s spores to predict the movement of a cloud of fungal spores, emitted from a specified location.

Research Plus – Pre-commercial stump harvesting. Mr Tom Kent WIT €92,879.00

The proposal will objectively document the supply chain operational productivity, production costs and quantify and characterize the resulting wood fuel. The implication of this proposal is that the broader forest sector can benefit from the information and knowledge generated.