

Introduction

The *ITGA Forestry and Timber Yearbook* celebrates its 25th edition this year. Over those years it has continued to develop and enhance its value to growers – as have the other activities and services of the Irish Timber Growers Association.

Producing the yearbook, like all our activities, is a co-operative effort and thanks are due to the contributors, advertisers and sponsors, the production team and the ITGA executive for bringing it all together for the last 25 years and making it the most important industry reference guide for growers and timber buyers alike.

Providing information and education through publications and field events remains a core part of the activities of the Association and is the most visible part of what it does for most members. No less important is the often unseen work which is done in representing members interests at national level. ITGA is engaged in policy issues through participation in industry review groups, input to bodies such as COFORD and direct representation of growers interests at Ministerial and Departmental level.

The support of members for all of this work is vital. Attendance and engagement at field events helps share practical experience between experts and growers alike – and often the growers become the most valuable experts through their experience. Equally important is engagement by members with local and national representatives to bring forestry matters to their attention to ensure the growers voice is heard at all levels.

The new Forestry Bill is currently working its way through the legislature and it is an opportunity to make constructive and positive inputs to the future of the forest industry. We are actively engaged in highlighting potential enhancements to the bill and many of these have been outlined in our submission published in the recent edition of the ITGA Newsletter (available to members on our website www.itga.ie). We would encourage members to read the submission and bring the suggestions and points raised to the attention of their local representatives.



Brendan Lacey
Chairman
Irish Timber Growers
Association

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This edition of the yearbook highlights a number of key areas of interest to the ITGA. In the context of the growing volume of timber becoming available from members' forests, we highlight the work we have been doing regarding timber price information, sales systems and developing the template *Tree Sales Agreement*. Also featured is our regular update on forestry taxation matters. We continue to be actively engaged on the issue of the inappropriate treatment of forestry income for taxation purposes and, having gathered widespread support for our position, it will remain a priority issue for us in the coming year.

Looking back at 2013 a highlight for us was the successful ITGA conference centre at the Irish Forestry Woodland and Bio Energy Show in Stradbally during May. We are working to support the inclusion of the Show as a biennial event in the Irish Forestry calendar. Its growing success is a clear demonstration of the maturing of the sector as an important factor in Irish rural and economic life.

In 2014 we look forward to a further series of informative field days and newsletters and also the continued progress of forest certification in Ireland as outlined in this edition of the yearbook.

The timber industry has been successful in marketing and increasing exports of Irish timber products which points to a positive future for growers. National forestry policy and legislation is an important factor in shaping that future and realising its potential. The Forest Policy Review Group Report, the Forestry Bill and forest taxation are key drivers for that future and we will continue to engage with relevant authorities through constructive input to ensure a sustainable forest industry for the benefit of all our members.

Members make an Association and ITGA would like to thank all those who assisted us in various ways through the year and hosted field days, contributed to this yearbook and our newsletters and those who worked with us at the ITGA Conference Centre at the Forestry Show.

With very best wishes to all our members for 2014.



Brendan Lacey
Chairman
Irish Timber Growers Association