

# Introduction

I am very pleased to introduce the 26th edition of the ITGA *Forestry and Timber Yearbook*. 2015 will be an interesting year as we see the implementation of the Forestry Programme 2015-2020 and new Forestry Act. The commencement of the forestry grant measures will set the tone for the next six years of establishment, management and harvesting of timber in Ireland.

We look forward to the continued development of forest certification options for timber growers following the endorsement of the PEFC Ireland Forestry Standard. We also look forward to the progressing of the recommendations contained in the Forest Policy Review Group Report which was launched by Minister of State, Tom Hayes TD, including the recommendation to increase annual afforestation and the continued development of an efficient forest road and harvesting infrastructure.

As a representative organisation, our focus is on providing practical support for our members. The production of the *Forestry and Timber Yearbook* is one of our key supports to timber growers, providing information updated annually, on the Irish Forestry sector in an easy to use reference guide. Contact details for service providers, contractors, and timber buyers along with historic timber price information and industry statistics are all included.

As more of our members' forests are into the stage of early thinning, we have highlighted in the Yearbook the need for growers to take care of their asset and ensure their interests are protected when it comes to selling timber. ITGA has produced both a Template Master Tree Sales Agreement and a Timber Sales Dispatch System to help and provide guidance on avoiding potential pitfalls in the timber sales process.

Reflected in this edition are a number of articles highlighting a significant part of ITGA's work during the past year in the area of policy and legislation. It has been a year of unprecedented activity on this front. ITGA had an input into the Forest Policy Review Group Report and also made various important representations on the Forestry Bill. In this regard, ITGA invested considerable time in highlighting timber growers concerns with the initial draft Bill and made several successful proposals to improve the efficiency and use of resources in areas such as



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Chairman  
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forest planning, the duration of Felling Licences and recognition of the right of forest owners to compensation in cases where a Felling Licence is refused. ITGA also provided active support and advice to other organisations in the sector.

ITGA continue to engage with the relevant Departments on forestry taxation and this is an area that needs more input during 2015. Current forestry taxation provisions do not recognise the timing of income from commercial woodlands and as a result acts as a disincentive to the achievement of national policy objectives including afforestation targets, achieving climate change mitigation through forestry and current taxation also acts as a disincentive in ensuring a consistent roundwood supply to industry. ITGA will continue to highlight forestry’s unique long term investment timeframe and the need for forestry taxation provisions to recognise this.

The Committee of ITGA are very grateful for the support of all its members. Continued support through membership and participation in the Association’s activities will help keep the voice of ITGA strong in representing the timber growing sector. In addition to significant representations by your Association in relation to the draft Forestry Bill, the draft Forestry Programme and the Agri-taxation review, your support helped us develop the Template Master Tree Sales Agreement and participate in many industry groups during 2014 including the Windblow Taskforce, COFORD Working Groups, PEFC Ireland and many more.

ITGA would also like to thank all those who assisted us in various ways through the year and hosted our field days, contributed to this Yearbook and our various newsletters.

The sustainable potential of the forest industry in Ireland is as strong as it has ever been. The adoption of recommendations of the Forest Policy Review Group and the implementation of the Forestry Act will be helped through positive engagement by the Association and its members. You can support this by continuing your membership and encouraging others to join. Please keep an eye on our website [www.itga.ie](http://www.itga.ie) for updates on our activities and field days throughout the year.



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