

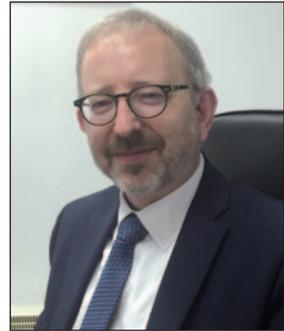
Introduction

Welcome to the 2021 and 32nd edition of the *ITGA Forestry and Timber Yearbook*.

The Covid-19 pandemic has placed many sectors, including forestry, under pressure. The forestry sector was even more impacted by the logjam in the processing of forestry licences and appeals. The passing and enactment of the Forestry (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2020 and subsequent regulations will, we hope, go a long way to resolving the crisis which impacted greatly on timber supply to Irish wood processors during the past year. It must now be followed up with the enhanced resourcing of the Forestry Appeals Committee as well as strengthening resources for more timely issuing of forestry licences in the first place. We must also see the full implementation of the recommendations outlined in the Mackinnon Review.

The Covid-19 pandemic has led to the cancellation or deferral of many of our ITGA field activities this year, either resulting from localised or national restrictions. We look forward to resuming these activities at the earliest opportunity. This does not mean we have been less active. Far from it. In the article on ITGA's role in policy, submissions and related initiatives, Donal Whelan, our Technical Director, outlines the significant body of work which has been undertaken on your behalf during this period. We have also continued to produce our newsletters and the *Forestry and Timber Yearbook*. The importance of these publications is even greater than before in the absence of collective member discussions in the field.

The forestry and timber sector has played a key role during the pandemic. Supply chains would not have been able to function without wood products and packaging. We still have a significant housing deficit for which locally grown timber is essential to enable increased construction. This timber which comes from commercially managed plantations also plays a vital role in storing carbon sequestered from the atmosphere in long life wood products as used in the building process. Increasing the use of wood in this area can also be enhanced through increased use of timber frame construction methods as well as the emerging capabilities of engineered wood products as outlined in the article "Building in softwood". Ireland's climate strategy needs forestry at its core and ITGA will continue to actively engage with policy makers to maximise its contribution.



*Brendan Lacey
Chairman
Irish Timber Growers Association*

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In this edition of the yearbook, ITGA are calling for the introduction of a Carbon Code which will reward timber growers for the value of their contribution on climate action. It is important that verifiable, auditable protocols are in place to allow owners realise this value. The statistics section of the yearbook highlights the fall off in planting rates. We must incentivise landowners to get back to the levels of afforestation required (8,000 + ha per annum) under the Climate Action Plan. Rewarding timber growers for their role in carbon sequestration would be a necessary part in achieving this target.

Timber markets have experienced some volatility over the past year, as seen in the price statistics section of the yearbook. Timber prices decreased in 2019 and early 2020. The impact of Central European storm and beetle damaged wood hitting the UK timber market caused a weakening of Irish roundwood prices. This was reversed during the year as the domestic supply crisis limited timber availability. ITGA continues to collate price information through the Wood Price Quarterly and we urge members to submit their timber sales data in a fully confidential manner to roundwooddatabase@ucd.ie

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Donal Magner, Donal Whelan, and the entire production team of the *ITGA Forestry and Timber Yearbook*, Ben & Gail Quinn and Gino Forte for another excellent edition. I would also like to thank the ITGA Executive Secretary, Mechteld Schuller, for her continued support to members during this challenging time. The ITGA committee, working groups and field day hosts have continued to do great work even with uncertainty around whether activities would be permitted during the pandemic. The same level of preparation has gone into the field days and we look forward to using it when we can resume meetings. I would like to thank the Department of Agriculture and our advertisers and sponsors for their continued support throughout the year. Thanks also to Minister Pippa Hackett for her foreword and generous words for the association.

I would finally like to remember the late Derry O'Hegarty who was a long-time member of the ITGA Committee and a regular contributor to this publication. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.



Brendan Lacey
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