



Irish Timber Growers Association

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ITGA call for appointment of Minister for Forestry

The Irish Timber Growers Association has today called for the urgent appointment of a Minister of State for Forestry to help address the issues facing the industry. The Association has pointed out that the forestry and timber sector has considerable unrealised potential. Planting forests also helps address our national carbon balance through forests absorbing and fixing carbon.

Ireland's forestry and timber sector is a real success story currently employing an estimated 16,000 people across the state. It comprises a vibrant forest products sector with state-of-the-art boardmills and sawmills and exporting a high proportion of product output. In fact, since the downturn in the home construction industry over 80% of the output from our panelboard sector is exported along with over 75% of our sawn timber production. With half of the forest estate less than 25 years old, timber production and employment in the sector are set to grow significantly. Incredibly, at present roundwood is being imported from Scotland by sea to supply our timber industry while most of the industry's production is exported.

‘The forestry sector has the potential to make a major contribution to our economy in both planting new forests and also in harvesting its growing wood resource through the thinning of woodlands. With economic output from the wider forest and timber industry calculated at c. € 2.2 billion annually, the sector is poised to contribute significantly to Ireland's economy’, according to Brendan Lacey, Chairman of the Irish Timber Growers Association (ITGA). To highlight the growing and future importance of the sector, the Association will be hosting its Conference at the upcoming Irish Forestry, Woodland and Bio Energy Show to be held at Stradbally Hall, Co. Laois, the site of the Electric Picnic this Friday and Saturday. Announcing the programme of speakers at the ITGA Conference centre, Brendan Lacey said that Stradbally Hall has a long tradition of forestry and is a particularly fitting venue for showcasing our forest and timber industry.

The two days of talks at the ITGA Conference centre, which is supported by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, are free to all who attend the Show and the first paper outlines the All Ireland Roundwood Forecast which collates forecast volumes from both State and private sector forests and provides a reliable basis to plan expansion of the forest products and wood energy sectors. Other talks will look at using forest thinnings for biomass, the threat of the new Ash dieback disease and guidelines on forestry valuation and taxation among many more interesting topics. On Saturday 11th May the ITGA Conference will also appeal to families with Eanna Ni Lamhna going ‘Wild in the Woodlands’.

Information on the Show and the full range of talks at the ITGA Conference centre can be accessed on www.itga.ie and www.ifwshow.ie

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