

FORESTRY & TIMBER NEWS

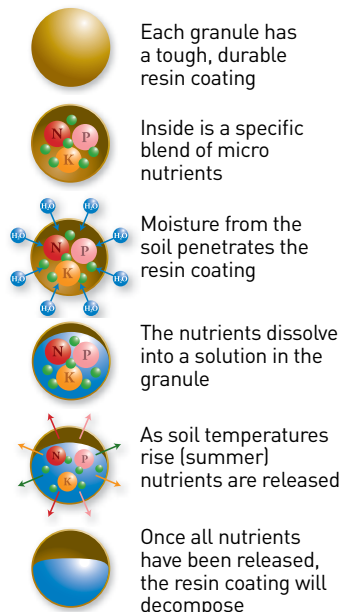


December 2015 Issue 72

TREEBOOST Controlled Release Forestry Fertiliser

SINGLE APPLICATION FOR DOUBLE THE GROWTH

- TREEBOOST fertiliser has been scientifically tested in UK forests for both conifer and broadleaf planting
- For application to the root zone at time of planting
- One 10g application provides essential nutrients for up to two growing seasons
- Supplied in 1kg bags for easy handling, and with 10g scoops for easy application
- In trials, Sitka Spruce treated with TREEBOOST had double the height growth, and a 60% gain in girth during their first growing season, compared to untreated trees



Political engagement p4



International forestry p14



Fencing/timber treatment p23


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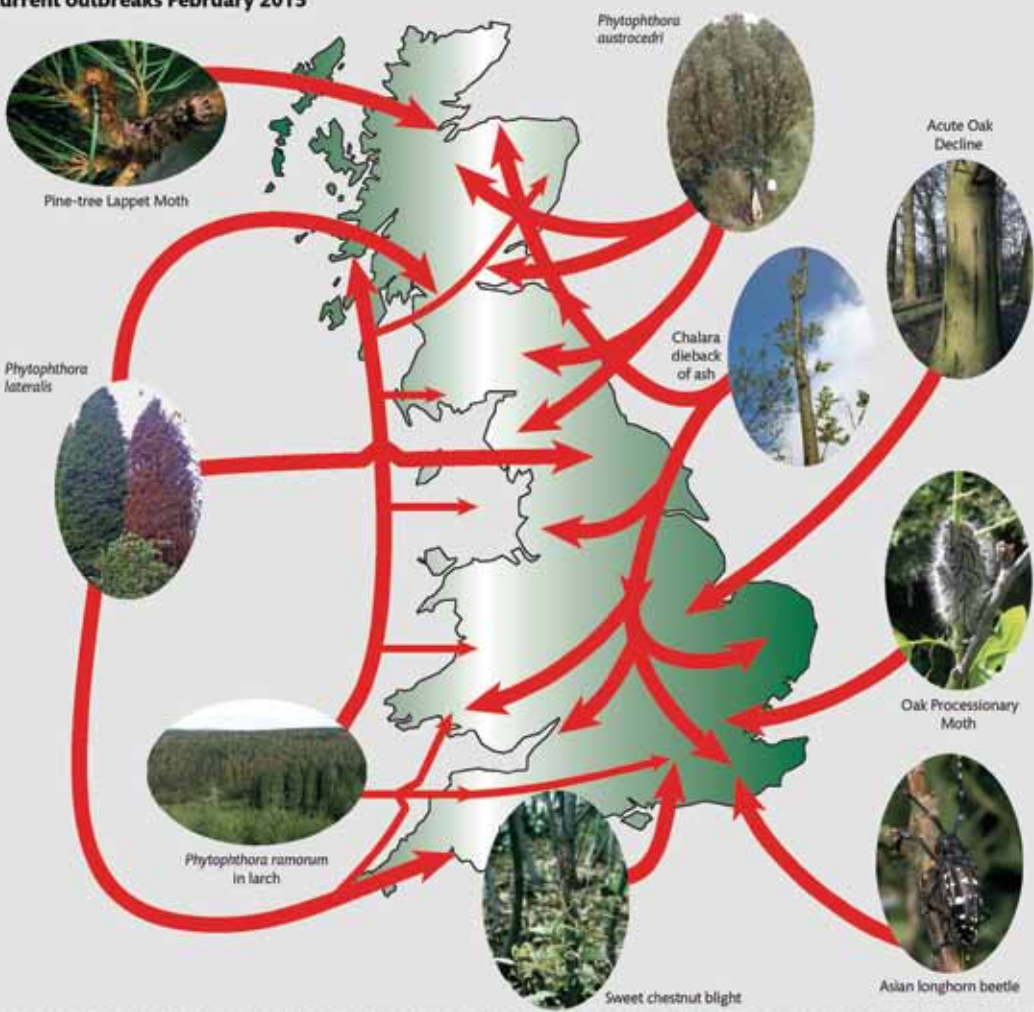
Data from trials conducted in 2014/2015 season

MAELOR
Forest Nurseries Ltd


Imported plants are the greatest biosecurity threat to UK forests

 **Forest Research**
New tree Pests and Diseases


Current outbreaks February 2015




Widespread throughout Britain




Dothistroma needle blight




Horse Chestnut bleeding canker and leaf miner




Great spruce bark beetle



Chalara dieback of ash page on the Forestry Commission website
www.forestry.gov.uk/ahab



Top tree pests and diseases page on the Forestry Commission website
www.forestry.gov.uk/ahab/pestanddiseases



Plant and disease page on the Forest Research website
www.forestry.gov.uk/ahab/pestanddiseases

www.forestry.gov.uk/pestsanddiseases

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The Research Agency of the Forestry Commission

Image supplied courtesy of Forest Research

As well as the existing outbreaks shown above, there are many other pests and diseases heading our way. For example, the **Pine Processionary Moth** is heading north, arriving recently in Paris on infected nursery stock. And with climate change it is likely that exotic pests such as the Pine Processionary Moth will be able to survive and breed in the UK.

To avoid the risks associated with imports, Maelor does not import trees or buy trees from suppliers that import. All of our trees are grown at Maelor throughout their life.



While Confor's efforts in promoting the sector are reaping rewards, it's no time for complacency, says **Stuart Goodall**

The single voice that is being heard

Recent weeks have demonstrated that Confor is making real progress in promoting the industry.

The One Show featured productive forestry and sawmilling, and we secured coverage in national print media and radio. At an excellent Westminster conference, the UK forestry minister paid recognition to Confor's lobbying efforts as he announced that the £1m Fund announced in the spring budget had been secured for the sector against the backdrop of further swingeing cuts to Defra's budget, and the chair of our All Party Group announced there would be a select committee inquiry into forestry.

In Wales, political engagement has gone from occasional to frequent, and feedback from politicians and officials has been that they recognise Confor has stepped up its game in representing the sector. In Northern Ireland, the new grant scheme reflects excellent work by members.

I can assure you, however, that none of this is being taken for granted and no one will be resting on laurels. Our sector has been punching below its weight for too long, and it takes time and repeated effort to not just change that, but also to embed that change and to use it to secure real benefits for the sector. It is a never ending (and resource and time-consuming) cycle.

I put much of these, and other successes, down to the increasing resources that Confor has secured from its rising membership, and from the fact that politicians and officials see Confor as a credible and professional representative of the whole sector – that single voice which they have asked for, for so long.

Looking towards 2016, that single voice is vital to maintain progress, but also to tackle a new world where the Forestry Commission no longer operates across cross-borders and its GB services are up for examination.

Increasingly politicians are looking to Confor for its views on forestry and timber. One point we need to get across is that research, national inventory and plant health need effective UK or GB wide collaboration. And we need to also consider whether we, as an industry, are ready to take on more responsibility.

Research, for example, is often highlighted as vital, but the industry contribution is tiny as a proportion of FR's budget. There's an opportunity for the sector to take a much more active and influential role if it is prepared to produce the resources, and Confor could bring those together.

In 2016, if the sector was able to come together more, then Confor could make a further step-change difference to the benefit of the industry.

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We want to hear from you
Forestry and Timber News is your magazine, please contact Stefanie with your views and comments

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£1m fund for forestry confirmed at Confor Westminster conference

Minister claims £1m is a positive signal about the importance the government attaches to the forestry and timber sector

Delegates at Confor's Westminster conference heard a series of positive announcements about the sector – but were also urged to look “outside the forestry bubble” and communicate better with the public.

Forestry Minister Rory Stewart recognized Confor's lobbying as he confirmed a £1m fund announced in the March budget to stimulate new planting in England would not be lost under the current spending review and will be open to applications soon.

It will be used to help fund the planning of planting applications for new productive woodland – and will also be available to innovative schemes which unlock forestry's potential to deliver rural employment and economic growth.

Mr Stewart said the country had a moral responsibility to produce more domestic timber: “We are the third largest net importer of timber after China and Japan. If we surround ourselves with wood and live with wood we have a moral responsibility to grow quite a lot of what we consume.”

He said there were “very many competing interests” in rural Britain but added: “We do need to get some more commercial forestry going. We can have a productive forestry sector which also fulfils a moral purpose in an increasingly intelligent and flexible way.”

Mr Stewart accepted that the £1m “would not change the world” but sent a very positive signal in tough economic times about the importance the government attaches to the forestry and timber sector. Stuart Goodall, chief executive of Confor, said it was important the £1 million fund was spent quickly and demonstrated positive results - to show the sector could deliver for rural economies in a cost-effective way.

Solitaire Townsend of sustainability consultancy Futerra challenged the forestry and timber sector to take its message to the public as well as politicians.

She warned: “The public does not have a clue about the technicalities and specificities of the industry - and it's important to consider what the public thinks when you are engaging with government.

“There is an absolute paradox - people love having wood products in their homes but hate trees being chopped down.” Gabriel Hemery of The Sylva Foundation backed this up, saying we



Minister Rory Stewart (right), who confirmed the £1m forestry fund at the conference, with Chris Davies (chair of All-Party Parliamentary Group on Forestry).



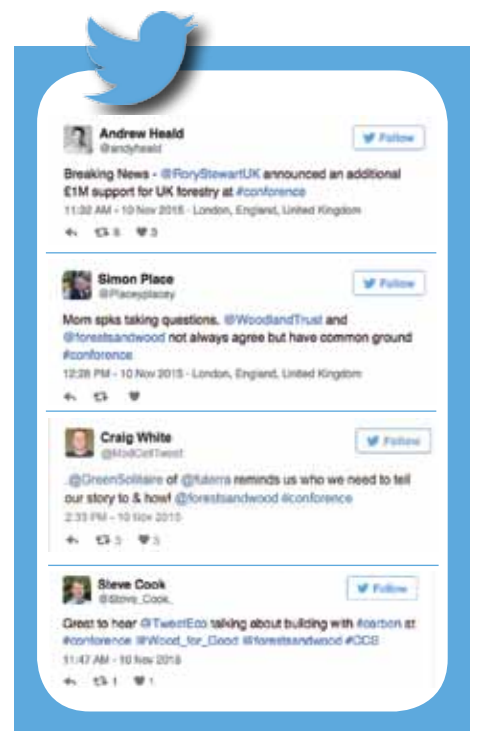
Conference panelists Stuart Goodall (centre) Solitaire Townsend of Futerra and Liberal Democrat peer Baroness Kate Parminter. More conference pictures at <https://flic.kr/s/aHskp8TWFL>

had lost our wood culture and allowed it to become “moribund”.

Ms Townsend said the forestry and timber sector had to come up with positive ideas which would appeal to the public and had to try to speak directly to them. Asked how forestry could get out of the bubble, she said: “The bubble is wonderful for technical, detailed conversations - but you must go outside it to talk to the public and have greater self-awareness of where you come from and where you are going.”

Craig White of White Design, called for the forestry and wood sector to be seen as the true home of carbon capture and storage, and outlined enormous opportunities for the sector from the custom-build housing market and the Government target of 200,000 new homes a year by 2020.

Mr Goodall said he thought this had been the best of Confor's three London conferences, noting the strong political line-up, a full house for Rory Stewart's speech – and the importance of having external speakers to provide a different perspective on how the sector can project itself to gain the support it needs from the public to politicians.



Confor steps up political engagement

A high-profile presence at the Conservative Party conference in Manchester included a fringe event with Forestry Minister Rory Stewart MP and a dinner where Confor members discussed major issues in the sector with Chris Davies, Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Forestry.

The dinner with Mr Davies has led to an Environment, Food and Rural Affairs committee inquiry and Westminster Hall debate on forestry in the new year, while the fringe event – also including contributions from Confor CEO Stuart Goodall and Austin Brady of The Woodland Trust – was highly significant, according to Mr Goodall.

He said: “I spoke to Rory Stewart before and after the event and continued our discussions on the importance of forestry and timber to our rural economies. It was great to hear him describe the sector as “unbelievably important” in a Westminster committee soon after the Manchester conference – and to confirm the £1m forestry fund at our Westminster conference.

“Rory has a strong understanding of the wide range of competing rural interests and realizes that cooperation and meaningful dialogue is the way forward. He clearly understands the moral imperative for the UK to produce more of the wood it consumes – and we have outlined very clearly the opportunities

presented to diversify and create a more sustainable long-term future by planting trees in upland areas.”

Mr Goodall said Anne-Marie Trevelyan, MP for Berwick-upon-Tweed, showed a detailed understanding of productive forestry in chairing the fringe event – and praised Mr Davies for taking a very practical approach to finding ways to drive up planting.

“He is a great supporter of the sector and we are delighted that we will be able to outline our vision in the Westminster hall debate and EFRA inquiries in 2016,” said Mr Goodall. “We are making real progress in England and in the devolved administrations too.”

Confor held an event at the SNP’s spring conference, and followed this up with a members’ dinner with Forestry Minister Aileen McLeod – who also covers the flagship Land Reform brief – at the party’s Autumn conference in Aberdeen. The dinner led directly to a request for Confor to feed into the SNP’s manifesto for the May 2016 Scottish Parliament elections

“Confor has worked closely with the SNP Government for some years and we are very pleased Aileen McLeod and her team can see the importance of the sector across rural Scotland in terms of employment, investment, innovation and environmental benefit,” said Mr Goodall. “We are delighted to be feeding into the manifesto development process and met with the team recently



Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP

to discuss how to continue the success of the sector in Scotland.”

Not to be outdone, Confor’s Wales Manager Martin Bishop continues to engage with politicians at the Welsh Assembly after Rebecca Evans AM, Deputy Minister for Food and Farming, provided the introduction for the video Integrated Forestry and Farming earlier this year.

Taking the story to Europe

Confor and Wood for Good helped take the story about using more timber to MEPs in October. Participating in a meeting of the ‘Club du Bois’, which brings together MEPs and the timber industry, both outlined the importance of increasing the use of wood in construction.

Referring to recent EU discussion on the bio-economy, Dave Hopkins of Wood for Good explained that wood was the perfect material and called for:

- Timber and wood products to be part of the EU bio-economy strategy;
- Measures to promote building with wood in European bio-economy plans - there is no building we cannot make from timber;
- A Renewable Material Strategy;
- Priority for recyclable products in Green Public Procurement.

Labour MEP for North East England, Paul Brannen, whom Confor has briefed previously on several occasions, participated both in the meeting and at a dinner held the previous evening. He expressed his continued



Stuart Goodall (left) with Dave Hopkins and Paul Brannen, MEP

support for wood in construction.

The meeting also heard how increasing the use of wood in buildings can help in the fight against climate change – storing CO₂ and displacing more energy intensive materials, and the wider benefits of using wood, such as reduced construction time and

positive feedback from occupants.

The meeting ended with a quote from the well-known architect Michael Green: ‘Wood is the most advanced material that we can build with. The Earth grows our food. The Earth can grow our homes. It’s an ethical change we have to go through.’

More trees, please

Confor has joined forces with the Woodland Trust to urge the UK Government to raise its ambitions and ensure tens of millions more trees are planted in England for the lifetime of this Parliament and beyond.

The new joint approach was announced to members of the revitalised All-Party Parliamentary Group on Forestry, led by Chris Davies MP, at Westminster – and was the subject of questions in the House just days later.

Confor and The Woodland Trust want the Government to commit to planting 7000 hectares of woodland every year until 2020 (around 15 million trees per year) and then to increase that to 10,000 ha per year when the next Government is elected in 2020.

The two organisations argue greatly-enhanced planting can deliver on a wide range of ambitions - increasing jobs and growth in rural economies, enhancing biodiversity

and habitat networks, reducing the UK's carbon emissions and cutting flood risks and improving water quality.

Caroline Harrison, Confor's England Manager, said: "Forest cover in England is only around 10% - lower than the UK average of 13% and way below the EU average of 38%.

"We welcome the Government's commitment to plant 11 million trees in the lifetime of the parliament, but this barely maintains current low levels of planting at 2500 ha per year. The government's aspiration in 2013 was an annual planting target in England of 5000 ha per annum but we are at a ten-year low; it is just not good enough."

"We believe that putting more of the right trees in the right places can deliver real gains for society - environmentally and economically. Having Confor and The Woodland Trust mentioned in a parliamentary question is proof positive that we are moving in the right direction."

Austin Brady, Director of Conservation and External Affairs at The Woodland Trust



FTN editor takes a break to care for next generation

This is me on 20 November 2015. Something inexplicable has happened to my body and in early January, I will have to leave Confor for a few months.

My partner and I (and people on the street) think it is going to be a boy, in which case, the name "Woody" was strongly suggested by my team. I am still negotiating a fee for a "lifelong PR service to the industry"... Jokes aside.

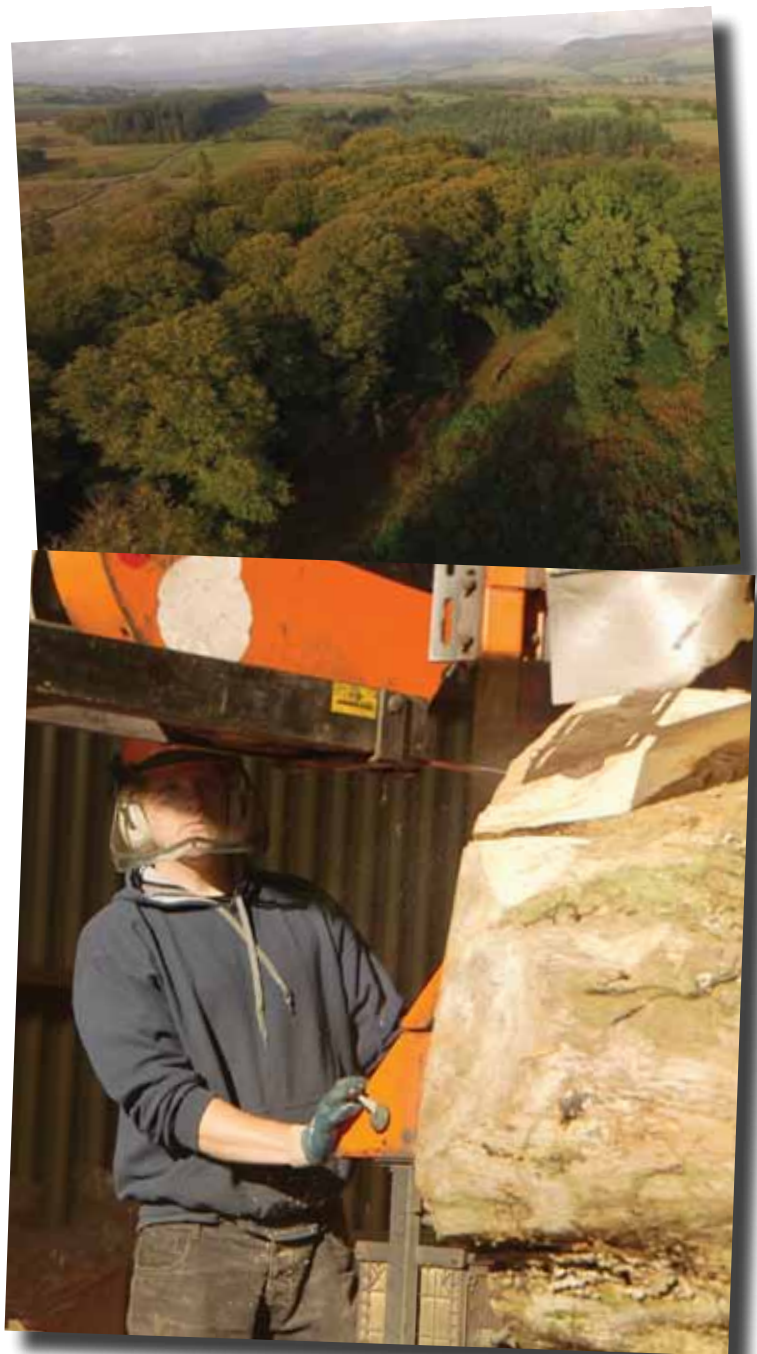
I am planning to be away for approximately half a year after my baby is born in January. During this time, I will, at last, complete my thesis for an Msc in Tropical Forestry for Bangor University. FTN will run as usual – I have found a part-time maternity cover whom we will introduce in the next issue. For any enquiries,



contributions etc, please keep using my usual contact e-mail address. All e-mails will be read on a regular basis and forwarded to a relevant staff member to be dealt with. I am, nevertheless, planning to keep in touch during my maternity leave.

For editorial enquiries – including suggestions for articles to be included in the February, April and June issues of FTN – please continue to use Stefanie.kaiser@confor.org.uk for now.

[#LookLikeAForester](#)



Video will showcase forestry and timber

As part of Confor's 2015 communication strategy to "challenge public perceptions", we are soon launching our new website. For the launch, we have prepared an exciting video that aims to showcase forestry and timber as an innovative, modern, diverse and responsible sector. The film, about 8 minutes long, aims to bring British forestry and timber closer to the wider public. We have spent four amazing days filming a range of people that work across our sector: from young forest managers, to hardwood processors, to architects, sawmillers and hauliers. They are all part of a wonderful story.

The video is about to be completed, and will be complemented by shorter videos on Environment, People and the Economy. In addition, we have just commissioned an explainer animation to give the public a better understanding of the timber and forestry – an exciting XXI century story!

All films will be available on our new website and can be used by the wider industry for communication purposes.

More in the February issue of FTN.

Pictured are stills from the video.



Confor gets productive forestry message across on prime time TV

Confor featured heavily in a prime-time TV feature which showcased the benefits of productive forestry to more than 4 million viewers.

Chief Executive Stuart Goodall was the main contributor to a piece on early-evening BBC magazine programme *The One Show* (29 October 2015).

One Show presenter Trish Adudu visited a forest and a sawmill and discussed the value of forestry and timber to the UK economy - a direct contribution of more than £2 billion and more than 40,000 jobs supported.

Stuart showed Trish how sawmills have invested in modern technology to ensure that every part of a tree is utilised to make products that people use in their everyday lives, right down to the wrappers for their sandwiches.

Andrew Vaughan of Tilhill also joined Stuart to discuss the need for more planting to ensure that sawmills and other businesses are not competing for a declining timber supply in the coming decades. Andrew also highlighted the disproportionate increase in regulation which is having a significant negative impact on new planting.

The programme also noted that the UK's forest cover, at around 13 per cent, is less than half the global average - and that we still import 80

per cent of our timber. Stuart made the case for enhancing productive woodland to ensure that rural jobs and growth are not lost in years to come - and helped to plant *The One Show*'s own woodland, with Trish wondering whether the programme would still be on air in 35-40 years when the trees reach maturity and are harvested!

Stuart Goodall said: "This was a tremendous showcase for the commercial forestry and sawmilling sector. Trish Adudu loved being in the forest and appreciated both its beauty and its economic importance. It was great to see a presenter taking time to understand the long-term nature of forestry, the value of the timber it produces - and that fact that forests can be attractive and productive at the same time."

The programme was filmed in Westwater forest, Dumfries & Galloway, and at the James Jones & Sons sawmill in Lockerbie. Confor would like to thank Tilhill and James Jones & Sons for making the filming possible.

Confor media profile grows

The feature on *The One Show* was only the culmination of a series of high-profile media appearances for Confor in the last few weeks, including a positive feature in *The Independent* (Timber production soars as industry reaps benefits of 1960s tree-planting boom, 12 October 2015) and coverage on Radio 4 in the *Farming Today* forestry week (19 October 2015).

Stuart Goodall said: "Recent media coverage has given mainstream exposure to positive messages about productive forestry and wood products - and highlighted the desperate need for new planting. It's vital that we get positive stories about productive forestry into the media and take those positive messages to key politicians to turn the tide and get many more trees planted in England and across the UK."



Wood Awards winners

The winners of the 44th annual Wood Awards were announced at a ceremony in London in November. The awards is the UK's premier competition for excellence in architecture and product design in the world's only naturally sustainable material. For full details of all winners see: <https://woodawards.com/2015-winners-revealed/>



Endgrain: Bespoke Furniture & Product joint winner (right)

Endgrain showcases the possibilities provided by dying wood instead of painting it. *Designer:* Yael Mer & Shay Alkalay, Raw-Edges Design Studio
Wood species Used: Jelutong, Southern Yellow Pine, Cypress veneer



Constellation Bar (Liverpool): Commercial & Leisure winner (left)

Constellations Bar is an outdoor venue that occupies a disused industrial recycling yard. *Architect:* Howard Miller Design • *Wood species:* Welsh Green Oak, TR26 Softwood Roofing Timber, OSB3 Boards

'Buy British' urges Environment Minister

Grown in Britain grabbed the nation's attention and UK headlines as the public and industry celebrated our forests and woodlands as part of the third annual Grown in Britain Week in October.

The Week coincided with the latest forestry figures revealing the industry produced a record 12 million tonnes of wood in 2014, increasing wood production in the UK by a third since 2008. But with 80% of our timber still imported, the environmental and economic imperative to 'buy British' is loud and clear.

As Grown in Britain Week got underway the importance of buying British timber products was delivered directly into millions of

UK homes as Grown in Britain's CEO, Dougal Driver was interviewed by BBC Breakfast on primetime television.

The interview was a landmark moment for Grown in Britain as Dougal explained to BBC's Tim Muffett and its seven million viewers why the sound of the chainsaw should be celebrated, and how consumers can support our woodlands and economy by 'buying British'.

Looking ahead to 2016 Dougal Driver said: "The market tells us that they want the Grown in Britain trademark of sustainable, legal and home-grown on their timber and wood. Our next job, is to secure the support of the whole supply chain, not just because it's 'a good



thing' but because it makes commercial sense to back Britain, to get a licence and feed a market that is crying out for more."

From forest to furniture

The 'buy British' message was echoed by the Defra Secretary of State, Liz Truss who kicked off GiB week at Heal's flagship furniture store on Tottenham Court Road where a Grown in Britain display of wood products showed the journey from forest to furniture.

"Grown in Britain is a fantastic initiative which means we can be confident of the local provenance of the wood and furniture we buy and know that it is legal and sustainable," said Liz Truss in her speech to high profile industry figureheads at the event.

The display at Heal's was designed to capture the public's imagination and to get them to think about where the wood products in their lives comes from. The inclusion of sawn boards and a STIHL chainsaw brought the sawmill and working forest into the high street to tell the grown in Britain story. As part of the display celebrity furniture designer Seb Cox showcased his new home-grown Tree-to-Table furniture collaboration with Heal's.

"Over 250 thousand hectares and millions



Dougal Driver and Liz Truss at the GiB Week launch

of tonnes of licensed Grown in Britain timber is working its way into the marketplace. We're seeing more British wood products on the UK high street, replacing imports and helping many woodlands to thrive, says Dougal Driver.

During the week Grown in Britain launched its Woodland Heroes campaign. By showcasing the stories and people behind our working woods, Grown in Britain hopes to inspire others to get the 42% of the UK's currently unmanaged woodlands working again.

Healthy home-grown woodfuel market

The National Wood Fuel Conference held every year in Grown in Britain Week ignited the call for more consistent policies from government, more cohesion in the sector and production of higher quality products.

With a quarter of woodfuel products failing to meet quality standards the launch of Woodsure, a quality assurance scheme for woodfuel, was widely welcomed by the sector during the Week. Speaking at the woodfuel conference Helen Bentley Fox, Woodsure Manager said: "A healthy woodfuel market holds the key to getting woodlands into management."

The incentive for landowners to reap the rewards of woodfuel and timber grown on their land was highlighted during the week, after it was announced by Grown in Britain and the Forestry Commission that landowners are missing out on millions of pounds of lost revenue.

Campaign reinforces importance of our woodlands



Grown in Britain has launched a 'Woodland Heroes' campaign to raise awareness of the importance of getting Britain's woodlands back into management. The campaign is backed by STIHL.

By showcasing the stories and people behind our woods, Grown in Britain hopes to inspire others to get the 42% of the UK's currently unmanaged woodland working again. Dougal Driver, Grown in Britain CEO said: "People from all sectors are playing a key role, often behind the scenes, to protect, improve and expand our woodland. This campaign is for them. We want to shine a spot-light on their stories."

Furniture designer Ted Jefferis is one of these people. Ted lives and works in an ancient oak woodland in Chichester and in 2013 he set up his own furniture making business TedWood. "We're living at a time when the 'grown and made in Britain' label matters more than ever; everyone is looking for provenance, whether it's apples or tables."

GiB will be targeting the general public with its campaign throughout 2016. If you've got a story to tell, Grown in Britain wants to hear from you.

Perfecting Wood Protection. We won't let you down



The importance of independent testing

The verification of performance claims is key to establishing confidence with the end user. More than 10 years ago, we introduced our Wolmanit® CX range of wood preservatives to the UK based on our exclusive active ingredient Copper-HDO. Since then the Wolmanit® CX range has largely remained unchanged. Wolman has a long history of independently testing their preservatives according to the EN252 standard with institutes or panels. This enables Wolman to constantly provide wood preservatives that ensure the highest quality of wood treatment.

Leading the Way in Wood Protection

 **BASF**
We create chemistry

Grey squirrel on the menu

Squirrel is turning up on menus, with the message that eating greys is both ethical and good for red squirrel conservation.

The Jugged Hare, in London's Barbican district recently renamed itself The Jugged Squirrel as part of a month-long promotion of grey squirrel. Grey squirrel, sourced from Yorkshire and served in a range of imaginative ways, was so popular that demand outstripped supply.

Getting grey squirrel added to the game repertoire of a swanky London restaurant is a further step towards changing public opinion. Head chef at The Jugged Hare, Stephen Englefield, was keen not only to get people eating squirrel but to raise awareness of the destructive nature of grey squirrels to a new audience, and of the threat they pose to the UK's woodlands and remaining red squirrel populations. Getting grey squirrel meat into the mainstream game repertoire can be an effective way of increasing public awareness of the need to remove greys.

Adventurous diners often initially try the meat simply because they are curious, but restaurants and butchers who supply grey squirrel have reported that once customers have tasted it – the meat is described as succulent with a light, nutty flavour – they often come back for more.



Squirrel Accord: Confor chairs R&D working group

Confor is on the steering group of the UK Squirrel Accord – bringing a concerted and coordinated approach to securing the future of red squirrels and woodlands, and to controlling grey squirrels. Confor has agreed to chair a Working Group on Research and Development to investigate:

- A new approach to the SQPV Vaccine in collaboration with Moredun Research Institute and Pirbright Institute;
- A new approach to the Immuno-Contracep-

A recipe to try...

In 2007 the Wild Boar Inn by Lake Windermere created quite a media storm when they tried to introduce grey squirrels on the menu – Peking-style.

Ben Berry, managing director of the company which owns the pub, commented: "Essentially the idea came up because there was a TV programme touring the country eating strange things. All we had was squirrels. They shot and cooked them on the programme and we followed it up by serving them as Peking-style squirrel in a pancake.

"Essentially it was a great story but they weren't overly popular and I wouldn't say business increased because of it."

This was the recipe.

Peking-style squirrel

2-3 squirrels

6 Chinese pancakes

3 spring onions

Cut into thin strips

2 inch piece of cucumber

Cut into thin strips

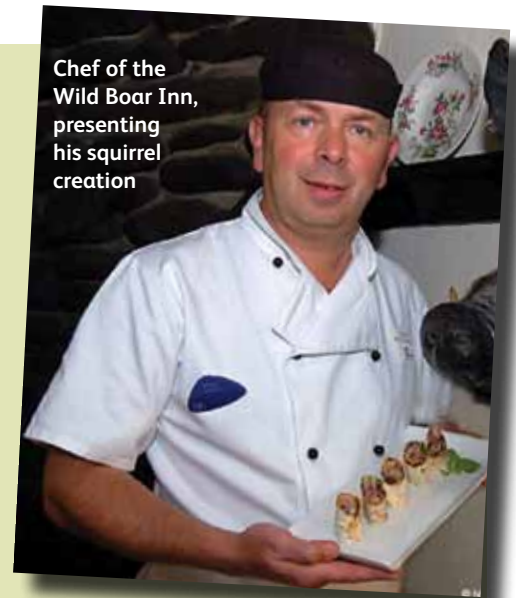
Jar Claire's Damson chutney

Sweet chilli dipping sauce

Season the squirrel and roast at 180 degrees for 1 hour.

Add 1 litre of water and cook for a further

Chef of the Wild Boar Inn, presenting his squirrel creation



30 mins by which time the meat should be falling off the bones.

Shred the meat using 2 forks, keep it warm and set aside

Put the pancakes on a chopping board and spoon a little damson chutney on the pancake.

Then add some of the shredded squirrel, some of the spring onions and some of the cucumber

Roll up the pancakes as tight as possible and serve with the dipping sauce.

NEWS IN BRIEF

'Richly deserved' award for Napier

Confor has welcomed the news that Edinburgh Napier University has been awarded the Queen's Anniversary Prize for the second time to recognise its world-leading work in timber engineering, sustainable construction and wood science.

It recognises the global impact of the university's research into construction innovations and carbon footprint reduction. Judges were impressed by a series of research successes relating to timber offsite construction, sustainable construction systems and architectural design, as well as the role played by staff in education programmes, public engagement and developing industry standards.

Confor Chief Executive Stuart Goodall said: "This award is richly deserved. Edinburgh Napier University's research into timber properties and its uses is of real practical benefit to the UK forestry and timber industry, and is helping the sector to be both economically successful and to provide products for everyday use."

Anthony Fortescue

It is with great sorrow that Confor reports the untimely and sudden death of Anthony Fortescue of Boconnoc Estate, Cornwall. Anthony was the High Sheriff of Cornwall and a member of Confor's Devon and Cornwall Committee.

Helping the reds... European Squirrel Initiative Christmas cards – see p48



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Can commercial forestry learn from Christmas tree industry?

Tony Johnston looks at where the two sectors cross over – in theory and practice



The production of Christmas trees is probably the ultimate expression of Short Rotation Forestry. Whilst not actually a forestry activity - generally it is classed as 'hardy ornamental plant production' - there are many areas where there is crossover in theory and practice. Christmas trees are a much more scientifically managed crop where recent advances in theory and practices are having real financial benefits. These are worthy of sharing with the wider forestry community.

Rotation length

Whilst many in the Christmas tree industry quite understandably strive for quality in order to realise the maximum price for their trees, they often forget the influence of compounding on their costs. With high inputs both in terms material and labour costs it makes more sense to reduce the rotation length, even if this is at the expense of final unit cost achieved. Even a one year reduction in the rotation can yield a 10% or more increase in return.

Many factors influence the length of rotation but it is primarily the species choice that will determine when you can start to harvest. Species, as in commercial forestry, must match the soil and site conditions present. Once this is determined the next choice will be provenance. In the major Christmas tree species there is a bewildering choice of provenance, not all of which will be suitable for a given location. Whilst this might sound relatively straightforward there is also the need to grow a product that the customer of the future wants to buy. Growers are now also considering factors such as weight

(how bushy) and form as these influence the ease of harvesting and transportation as these will have an influence on cost and hence margin achieved.

As can be seen in the table, no one species offers everything and species choice will always be based on a degree of compromise. I am still trying to find the perfect tree, this being one with reliable establishment, rapid growth, pest and disease resistance, minimal need for management intervention and good marketability. I continue to experiment with new species in the hope of one day finding this 'Holy Grail'. Commercial forestry seems to have found theirs in the shape of improved Sitka spruce but could look to improving margins by refining some management practices further.

Nutrition

Nutrition goes hand in hand with rotation length. In order to get this right from the start, soil testing is a must. This is not used enough within plantation forestry. Getting nutrition right gives better early establishment, aids plant health and disease resistance, gives a better quality product and ultimately leads to a reduced rotation length. Whilst fertiliser inputs are expensive, the adoption of foliar sprays in recent years have reduced costs significantly. Even if nutrition is focused on pre-planting and the early establishment phase of a commercial timber crop the advantages could justify the added expenditure.

Access for management

This is especially important in Christmas trees. Blocks are laid out to allow for mechanical access, initially for spraying and latterly for ease of harvesting. The loss of stocking levels is counteracted by the reduction in management and harvesting costs. Normally blocks are laid out based on the length of spray booms and the need to keep the distance the trees are hauled by hand to a minimum. Having a more open architecture means that trees in the middle of a field are accessible for inspection and management.



Harvesting Christmas trees (picture Simon Penson)

Herbicides

The use of plant protection products, (herbicides, pesticides and bio stimulants) is significantly higher in Christmas trees than in plantation forestry. In most cases its use is only justified in ensuring the quality of the tree as the cost would not be justified in timber crops. Where there could be a lesson is in the use of over-spraying with glyphosate. Christmas trees species (less Douglas fir) have shown tolerance to non-wetting glyphosate even when sprayed with tractor-mounted booms in the summer. Obviously the application rate is critical with common rates being 0.7l/ha in the summer rising to a maximum of 3l/ha when the trees are fully dormant. Summer spraying offers grass suppression only, the winter applications clean up the crop really well, albeit slowly. Spring glyphosate applications are generally mixed with a residual herbicide; however, this can add significant expense.

The use of glyphosate in the winter, avoiding the cost of hand spot spraying by using mechanical over-spraying, could offer a cost effective means of releasing a crop from grass and weed competition. This would allow for more rapid

Species comparison

Species	Establishment	Management (hit rate)	Rotation length input	Disease resistance (growth rate)	Sale value / marketability
Nordman fir	Very good	Low	8-10	Good	Good
Noble fir	Average	Low	7-9	Poor	Excellent
Norway spruce	Good	Medium	6-8	Good	Low
Lodgepole pine	Very good	Medium	6-8	Very good	Low
Fraser fir	Medium	Low	6-8	Average	Good
Douglas fir	Poor	High	5-7 years	Average	Average
Grand fir	Average	High	5-7 years	Good*	Average

* Grand fir is very prone to Current Season Needle Necrosis (CSNN) that can render significant proportion of a crop unsalable that season.



establishment and ultimately rotation length. Whilst discussing conifers, experience shows that most broadleaved trees are relatively tolerant of these low levels of glyphosate when dormant. In practice I tend to over-spray at a rate of 1.5l/ha and have not lost any trees even after repeated applications over a number of years.

Marketing

The marketing and sale of Christmas trees differs from both agriculture and forestry in that the grower dictates the price. He does not bring his product to the market and wait to see what the purchaser is willing to offer. Seldom do you find other sectors of industry as open to the influence of the buyers as you do in agriculture and forestry. Whilst this could be understandable with a perishable food product there is no reason, apart from tradition, that forestry should follow this mode. Trees can continue growing if the desired price is not realised. In order for this system to work the seller of a timber crop must keep a close and constant eye on what is happening throughout the markets in order to offer his product at a realistic price. This is also better based on roadside sale, much

akin to Christmas trees being sold 'farm gate'.

Also of note is that the contract growing of a Christmas tree crop is becoming more common. The purchaser stipulates volume, species and grade requirement before the crop is planted and it is subsequently managed to their specification. Whether this is viable for rotations over 10 years is debatable but certainly worthy of consideration in some circumstances.

In conclusion. Instead of planting in the hope of a good yield class should we not look to modify our management practices in order to maximise the financial potential of the improved planting stock now available. Whilst the additional early cost is higher, and compounded over the rotation, the ability to gain an improved yield in a shorter time period could be justified. An owner being more likely to invest more if the return can be realised in the medium to long term compared to some time away in the future.

Whilst obviously the ground conditions will dictate the level of intervention there is certainly merit in considering some of the aforementioned Christmas tree tactics within the wider forestry sector.

Growers go head to head for Downing Street honour

They travelled from the furthest corners of the UK and have spent a decade nurturing their perfect specimen – and on 20 October, Britain's best Christmas tree growers went head to head in their national competition.

Out of more than 100 entrants, British Christmas Tree Growers' Association member Andrew Ingram was declared the winner of the Champion Tree category and now has the honour of selecting a tree for Downing Street this year.

Andrew Ingram, from Christmas Tree Common in Oxfordshire, presented an impressive *Lasiocarpa* tree (a type of fir) at the peer-judged event, which was held today at Hole Park in Kent. It is the third time he has scooped the top prize.

Also emerging victorious and facing a trip to the Prime Minister's residence this festive season is Hans Alexanderson, from Santa Fir Christmas Tree Farm in Guildford. He claimed a double win and was judged to have the Champion Wreath as well as the runner up position in the Champion Tree category.

Both growers will now visit Downing Street in the first week of December, where Andrew's choice of 20ft tree will be positioned at the steps of Number 10, while the wreath will hang at the door throughout Christmas, and Hans's selection of tree will stand within the Pillared Room.

The contest is now in its 17th year and is entirely managed by the British Christmas Tree Growers Association. It typically sees contenders from 18 to 80 coming together to showcase their trees and be judged by fellow members.

Each farmer, who will have spent around 10 years nurturing the tree to full 'competition' height, is able to enter categories including Best Nordman, Best Other Fir, Best Pine, Best Norway Spruce, Best Other Spruce, Best Container Grown, and Best Festive Wreath.

Finalists were permitted to submit only one tree into each category, and trees entered must be commercially cultivated and be 1.8 metres (+/- 400mm) high from base to tip. Each is judged for foliage, colour, shape and marketability.

Harry Brightwell, secretary of the British Christmas Tree Growers' Association, said: "Our message this year to all festive lovers is to make choosing a tree a special event for the household – and to 'Buy Real, Buy British'."

www.bctga.co.uk



A culture of forestry and

While the UK and Canada may occupy different ends of the spectrum when it comes to scale of the resource and maturity of the processing industry, there is real opportunity for the two countries to learn from each other, says **Stuart Goodall**

Canadians feel connected to their forests – all 348 million hectares of them (the UK has 3.1 million ha). From the maple leaf of their flag to holidays spent in the forests and the 90% of family homes built with wood, a clear forestry and wood culture exists, where using home-grown wood products is part of everyday life. 200,000 people work directly in the sector, spread across rural Canada.

While the connection to Canada's forests is in decline in the country's expanding cities, even here there are plans to turn the ubiquitous 21st century concrete, steel and glass jungle into a sky-scape of wooden buildings, primarily through the use of Cross Laminated Timber (CLT). Groups work with school children to educate them about forestry.

While Scotland builds two-thirds of new homes in timber frame, and London is emerging as a major global market for CLT, the contrast with the UK is evident.

However, we do share an interest in looking at new ways to use wood. In Canada this is being driven by a significant fall in exports to its principal market, the USA. The US has seen a dramatic fall in house building since 2008 and, like developed countries worldwide, a major reduction in demand for newsprint. As a consequence, Canada has seen pulp and paper mills close across the country and sawmills struggle.

Forced to look for new markets, Canadian

companies are working with the federal and provincial governments to invest millions of pounds every year in research and innovation, market development and promotion.

The construction sector is a key target, with the larger provinces boasting testing equipment that is the envy of comparable UK facilities. Whether it is fire, acoustic or strength testing, the industry has access to what it needs to demonstrate suitability for use in low and high-rise building.

Outside of construction, impressive research facilities are utilised to develop products to replace oil, to manufacture useful products like lignin and even to utilise cellulose in foodstuffs.

When it comes to forest management, the Canadian and provincial governments are very concerned about reputation. While the forests (94% publicly owned) have been actively managed to produce wood for generations, environmental groups have challenged the harvesting and management practices of forestry businesses and how aboriginal rights are protected. Recent concern over declining woodland Caribou numbers have prompted calls for greater habitat protection.

Disagreements, and even legal action, still break out as different groups seek to exert control and influence over a major national asset. Recently federal and provincial governments have



90% of family homes are built with wood and the use of Cross Laminated Timber (CLT) is growing



stepped up their promotion of how they regulate and protect the forests to protect the reputation of a still nationally important industry.

Both Canada and the UK face the challenge of an ageing workforce alongside a desire to promote greater diversity. While the UK boasts a more technically advanced sawmilling and harvesting sector than Canada, both face stereotypes of low-skilled, low-paid jobs and an unwelcoming environment for women.

In Canada, entire rural communities can be reliant on a mill and the businesses that service it. The government is keen to maintain employment opportunities in rural areas and the industry has launched an ambitious programme called The Greenest Workforce to challenge misconceptions and attract a new generation to the sector.

Both countries also face the challenge of climate driven changes to weather patterns and threats from pests and diseases, and a desire to



Timber industry called for 'strong stand' in Paris climate talks



The European timber and woodworking industry – Europe's fifth largest manufacturing sector – called on EU political leaders to take a principled, ambitious stand ahead of the UN COP21 climate talks in Paris in November.

The industry highlighted to policy makers that the timber supply chain provided an excellent example of how it was possible to achieve economic growth without increasing GHG emissions.

The call followed a recent meeting of the 'Club du Bois', a cross-party discussion forum with MEPs on all legislative matters affecting the forestry and timber sector in Europe and jointly organised by the European Sawmills Organisation (EOS), the European Panel Federation (EPF) and CEI-Bois, the European Confederation of Woodworking Industries.

Academic, peer-reviewed studies have estimated that emissions amounting to 14-31% of global CO₂ could be avoided by using more timber in construction. This is partly through creating less carbon-intensive material such as concrete and steel, partly through the carbon sequestration and storage effect of timber products. A further 12-19% of annual global fossil fuel consumption could be saved through using more wood waste as energy.

David Hopkins, Director of Wood for Good in the UK said: "There is a huge opportunity for Europe to show real leadership at these talks, driving the growth of forests, sequestering more greenhouse gases and boosting the rural economy while developing low-carbon urban environments. The message is clear: Build with Carbon. Don't emit it."

wood



The tallest commercial timber building in the UK – built for Sky in 2014 – used precision-engineered timber construction systems. Building in this way can drastically reduce CO₂ emissions says the timber industry.

demonstrate how growing trees and using wood products can play a crucial role in efforts to limit emissions of greenhouse gases. In this regard, the UK, through the wood promotion campaign Wood for Good has led, producing engaging animations to tell a simple, but important story.

The UK also has an opportunity to learn from the way that Canada, with its federal and provincial governments, co-ordinates support for the forestry and wood processing sector. The public and private sector collaborates across provinces to fund and design research, while wood promotion is shared. Even with a far bigger industry than the countries of the UK combined, each province recognises the benefits, and opportunities, from working with others.

A council of forest ministers meets regularly to discuss standards and reputation, research and industry development – a possible model for a 'fully-devolved' UK?

NEWS FROM INTERNATIONAL FOREST INDUSTRIES

Information as of October 2015

Lumber exports from Russia up by 8.4% in January – August

For the first eight months of 2015 total volume of lumber exports from Russia increased by 8.4% to 9.44m tons year-over-year, Federal Customs Service of Russia reports.

The volume of Russian exports of Roundwood for the reporting period amounted to 12.07m m³ (0.9% less than in same period last year).

Export value of Roundwood decreased by 26.5% to \$867.2m; export value of lumber decreased by 18.1% to \$2.1bn.

11.66m m³ of roundwood (-10.2%) worth \$849.5m (-26%) were shipped to other countries in January – August 2015; to CIS countries - 416.2 thousand m³ (+2.3%) worth \$17.7m (-35.9%).

7.38m tons (+17%) of lumber worth

\$1.79bn (-9.6%) were shipped to other countries; to CIS countries – 2.052m tons (-14.5%), worth \$309.1m (-47.6%).

Brazil mills benefit from lower sawlog prices

Sawmills in Brazil have become much more competitive in the export market the past few years because of substantially lower sawlog costs. In the second quarter of this year, average log prices were down to their lowest levels in ten years, according to Wood Resource Quarterly. This downward trend may rebound later in 2015 as the export market for lumber is likely to improve.

Hardwood chips

In July 2015, prices for overseas traded hardwood chip were 14% below their peak four years ago, according to the latest FOEX Chip Price Indexes.

Britain's place in global forestry

Richard Howe explains the Forestry Commission's approach to international issues

Since the Forestry Commission was founded in 1919, it has played a full part in forestry issues worldwide. Indeed, our structure was initially based on the Colonial forest services, particularly India, and used the same terms such as 'conservator' and 'district officer'. Since the end of Britain's colonial period, our forestry priorities have obviously changed but Britain continues to play an active and influential part in international forestry globally, regionally, and within the EU. The approach is informed by both our steadily expanding domestic forest area and the industry it serves and also by the fact that the UK remains a major importer of timber from forests worldwide. The focus is on managing forests sustainably to maintain the multiple functions of forests crucial to society, both at home and abroad.

Although forestry is now largely devolved to the 4 countries, international issues are reserved for the UK Government. Since 2012, the lead on international forestry policy has been held by Defra with the Forestry Commission in a supporting role. We provide specialist advice and policy support and also share approaches and expertise with many other countries and with EU Member States. Forest Research also co-operates and shares experience with the international community of research organisations and academic institutions.

Defra represents the UK in international fora, such as Forest Europe and the EU Council Working Party on Forestry. The Forestry Commission assists with technical input, providing appropriate specialists, and garnering the views of the

devolved administrations. The objective is to work up consensual UK positions on forestry topics, and on closely associated areas such as climate change, forest economics, biodiversity, forest inventories, and woody biomass for renewable energy.

In terms of forestry practice, the various international commitments to manage forests sustainably are incorporated within the UK Forestry Standard (UKFS). This provides a framework for domestic practice and straddles both reserved elements, (in that they translate internationally agreed approaches into national circumstances), and devolved elements that relate to the forestry policies of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Forestry is not included within the competence (i.e. the capacity to act) of the European Union. However many of the other areas in which the EU does have competence, (or shared competence), such as environment, energy, and agriculture have the potential to impact significantly on forests and forestry. Accordingly, EU



Member States and the European Commission co-operate on forestry matters through the EU Council Working party on Forestry and the EU Standing Forestry Committee.

Through the EU Standing Forestry Committee, the European Commission is keen to ensure the views of Member States forestry administrations on forestry matters are taken into account as policies are developed. This also involves seeking the views of environmental, forestry

FC AIMS ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

UK policy on international forestry is informed by domestic practice and the UK approach is promoted internationally.

A proportionate, or risk-based, approach is taken using existing UKFS-based mechanisms so that potentially detrimental impacts and burdens on forest owners and the UK sector are avoided or minimised.

A common UK approach is developed to forestry issues where this is desirable and feasible – taking account of country priorities, the views of UK organisations (such as Confor), research findings, and the practicalities of forest management.

The approach to forestry issues is coordinated across Government, taking full account of the agreed approach articulated by the UKFS.

Forestry expertise and specialists from across the UK are engaged in informing, developing and influencing the outcome of international forestry processes.

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New Generations Plantations project study tour in 2012. Led by WWF-International, this aims to promote the highest standards of sustainable plantation forestry worldwide and thus reduce deforestation of natural forests.

Early FC Commissioners

and other organisations who are often invited to contribute to ad-hoc working groups. For example, both FERN, a European environmental NGO for forests; and CEPF, European forest owners' organisation, were part of a recent working group on sustainability criteria for biomass.) CEPF is one of the principal forest-owners organisations and works to ensure private forestry interests are protected.

In order to clarify the Forestry Commission's approach to international issues affecting forestry a number of aims were identified (see panel).

The UK Government, through Defra and the Forestry Commission, is keen to ensure that practitioners in the UK are not put at a disadvantage through international processes.

Recent examples include the EU Timber Regulation, where the Forestry Commission worked with Confor to ensure the approach to implementation took full account of existing regulatory mechanisms - rather than by imposing unnecessary new requirements. The Forestry Commission has also engaged with the EU working group on biomass sustainability and has worked to ensure that requirements to demonstrate the sustainability of biomass are compatible with UK forestry practice.

Forestry support, through the Rural Development Regulations, is the responsibility of the

four country teams who work to develop their Rural Development Plans. However through the EU Standing Forestry Committee the UK has been influential in the revision of the EU Forest Strategy, as a framework for forest-related actions in support of sustainable forest management. One objective to improve the coherence of forest-related EU policies and ensure the sector's voice is heard. The Forestry Commission works to ensure the Strategy opens up possibilities for funding the sorts of activities relevant to the UK.

In terms of the UK's wider impacts on the world's forests through timber imports, the Government is fully committed to combatting illegal logging and deforestation. The UK is a member of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) which recognises the links between forests and sustainable development and aims to cut the current rate of deforestation by 50% by 2020 through concerted international actions. The UK is also supporting efforts to combat climate change and Defra's £140 million share of the International Climate Fund funds international projects to address deforestation.

The whole issue of deforestation is closely linked to how effective governments are at implementing the law, or governance. Within the EU, there is an Action Plan called 'Forest Law

Enforcement, Governance and Trade' or FLEGT. The UK is one of the leading countries in supporting FLEGT action internationally. The UK has also been at the forefront of applying the EU Timber Regulation, designed to minimise the illegal logging of timber.

The UK has a good reputation in the international forestry community and we have been regarded as world leaders in a number of new and challenging areas of sustainable forest management and forestry research. The value of international engagement is to ensure that international processes work to the advantage of the UK, and that UK policies and forestry practice are understood as agreements develop. As the part of government that manages forests, the Forestry Commission is well equipped to bring experience to the table. In doing so, we maintain our links with the wider sector. Together with our colleagues in Defra are always keen to make use of the expertise of Confor and its members to serve the interests of the forestry sector in Britain.

Richard Howe, MICFOR, is head of international forestry, standards and certification for the Forestry Commission, based in Edinburgh. He and his colleague, Frances Snaith, work closely with Defra on international forestry for the UK.

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Forestry and voluntary carbon markets

As the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations were taking place in Paris, **Vicky West** considers voluntary carbon markets and the opportunities they could continue to present for forestry in the future.

In the past decade, companies globally have voluntarily spent just under \$4.5bn to compensate for their emissions, supporting projects including avoided deforestation and woodland creation as well as renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. In fact, global demand for voluntary offsets grew by 14% to 87MtCO₂e (million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent) in 2014 according to the State of the Voluntary Carbon Markets 2015 report, with more than half the traded volume coming from forestry and land-use projects. Projects that reduce deforestation in the tropics form the majority, but woodland creation, agroforestry and grassland management also feature and tend to attract higher prices for carbon credits.

So why are corporates voluntarily buying carbon? A survey last year by ICROA (International Carbon Reduction and Offset Alliance) demonstrated that while around half of corporates interviewed tried to offset their entire organisation's emissions, others only compensated for the emissions from specific activities or products. They want to mitigate climate risks in order to deliver against their commercial, economic, social and environmental objectives; the main reasons for offsetting were cited in the survey as 'reputation and brand image', 'employee engagement', and 'market differentiation'. In fact, companies which offset their emissions are more engaged in directly reducing their own emissions compared to companies who do not offset, according to another Ecosystem Marketplace 2015 report. Compensating for unavoidable emissions is very definitely part of a comprehensive carbon management strategy for these companies.

Average prices for carbon from woodland creation projects have remained fairly stable at \$8.9 / tCO₂ Globally and \$11.2 / tCO₂ for European projects in 2014, and corporate buyers usually want to know that their investment also provides a wide range of social or environmental benefits in addition to the carbon saving – In fact there's an average \$2.7 / tCO₂ 'premium' for VCS credits where wider benefits are also recognised through certification to the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Standard.

Globally, the main buyers of carbon from for-

estry projects are corporates looking to compensate for part of their business activity, but the last year has seen an increase in events-based purchases (eg compensating for emissions of the World Cup in Brazil) and from individuals ('Stand for Trees' a social media campaign, allows individuals to purchase carbon from avoided deforestation projects).

Buyers of carbon from the UK's Woodland Carbon Code projects are attracted to the wider ecosystem and community benefits that are provided by these projects, in addition to knowing that they are tangible, local and visible – and sequester carbon. At least half of all the potential carbon sequestration that has been certified, has been sold upfront (1.6 MtCO₂e so far, in 102 projects). Allstar Fuel Cards has been working with project developer Forest Carbon during 2015 and has so far purchased carbon from eight woodland creation projects across the UK. They hope, over time, to compensate for the vehicle emissions of their Ecopoint customers. They were attracted to the many wider benefits of new woodlands, but in particular the opportunity to make a local impact - in the UK, where their customers are based. Waitrose, through the Woodland Trust, has since 2011 bought carbon from a large native woodland creation project in Cumbria. The aim, over time, is to compensate for the GHG emissions of their home delivery fleet. They were particularly attracted by the potential for woodlands to improve biodiversity and control flooding, and working with the Woodland Trust on these projects raises their environmental



and social corporate responsibility credentials as well as providing them with a strong marketing message. Involvement with the project also provides opportunities for staff engagement through tree planting days.

Globally, the State of Forest Carbon Finance 2015 notes that as the market for forest carbon



Allstar's Natalie Rew and Stephanie Teasdale with project developer Forest Carbon's director Steve Prior at the entrance to the Madresfield site in 2015. Photo: Forest Carbon Ltd (Top) Tree planting at Warcop in 2014. Photo: Woodland Trust



matures, there is more demand for sequestered carbon than for future emissions reductions. In fact in 2014, only 30 % of purchases were for future emissions reductions, the remainder were for carbon sequestered in this or previous years. To date, the UK's Woodland Carbon Code has only seen the purchase of future emissions reductions, however, in 2016 the first 'sequestered carbon' credits will be available for sale and we wait to see whether purchases from UK projects follow this global trend.

Across the globe there are interesting developments which could help to improve the voluntary carbon market; in the UK, the recently-launched Peatland Code will in future provide a parallel process to certify and market the carbon savings from peatland restoration. We hope to work together to provide a more coherent 'offer' of UK land-based carbon. Across Europe there have been some concerns about how the lack of clarity in how carbon credits from domestic schemes (eg from the Woodland Carbon Code) should be accounted for in relation to national-level Kyoto carbon reduction commitments. However, progress in being made and Italy, Portugal and Spain are also developing forest carbon standards, and other EU countries are assessing how they can use voluntary carbon markets to promote further action on climate change in the 'non-traded' sectors of the economy. The EU is currently working on its 2030 Climate and Energy Framework, and the possible inclusion of Land Use Land Use Change and Forestry in Europe's carbon reduction com-

mitments could provide further opportunities for market-based approaches.

The UK's Woodland Carbon Code has been presented to the UNFCCC as an example of a domestic market-based approach and what is agreed at Paris about domestic initiatives will be key. Latin American countries such as Costa Rica and Mexico have launched a carbon tax with the facility for companies to voluntarily account for emissions reductions from domestic projects. In South Africa, the introduction of a carbon tax in 2016 could include domestic 'voluntary' carbon from VCS and Gold Standard projects in their mandatory programme. Trading Systems in California, South Korea and China are all developing to allow a proportion of domestic offsets, including forestry projects.

Global-scale demand and acceptance of local, domestic action could pave the way for increased clarity and demand from UK businesses for UK carbon reduction projects such as woodland creation under the Woodland Carbon Code and peatland restoration under the Peatland Code. Any agreement at the UNFCCC negotiations in Paris could result in a new carbon landscape.



What pain relief for declining paper markets?

Whilst world demand for paper and paperboard is forecast to grow, the graphic paper market is facing huge challenges in Europe. Pöyry proposes a different attitude to consolidation strategy to save the declining industry.

The graphic paper industry and newspapers in particular, have never really recovered from the recession of 2001-2002. Overcapacities remain in the graphic paper market and prices of newsprint have reached a historic low of around 450 EUR/t and below in the first and second quarter of 2015. At this price level even cost leaders are not able to cover their capital costs anymore.

Whilst world demand for paper and paperboard is forecast to grow, the graphic paper market is facing huge challenges in Europe. The current response from industry figures has been rapid reductions in capacity. In Europe more than 20% of capacity has been reduced, with shutdowns in the first quarter of 2015 already equating to 650,000 tonnes of annual capacity. Pöyry forecasts further demand reductions of approximately 3 million tonnes by 2025 – a deep cut to the industry

The recent spate of shutdowns of the least competitive plants has flattened and lowered the cost supply curve and thereby lowered the price for paper. Marginal producers have reacted by lowering their prices in a bid to regain market share.

Pöyry experts argue that the closing of the least competitive plants will further deteriorate the situation whereas strategic closings will help to stabilize and even increase prices. While the same amount of capacity exits the market, in both cases the effect is different. Rather than flattening the supply curve the slope of the curve increases and inaction will just allow market forces to further depress prices and challenge the viability of every company's operations.

Startling decline of boreal forest

The RFS reports that, according to a new report in Yale Environment 360 (published by the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies), there is growing concern among scientists that unprecedented warming is damaging the huge boreal forest that spans from Scandinavia to northern Canada.

Also known as 'taiga' or snow forest, this boreal forest landscape is characterised by its long, cold and snowy winters. It is the planet's single largest biome and accounts for 30 per cent of global forest cover.



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View from the Emerald Isle

By **Seán Lenihan**,
Kestrel Forestry
Consultants Ltd.



New Forestry Programme 2015 -2020

Ireland's new five-year forestry programme commenced on the 01 January 2015 after a period of intense consultation, lobbying and negotiation with the industry following the publication of the Draft Proposals in September 2014 by the government. The forest industry groups included among others:

Irish Forestry and Forest Products Association (IFFPA) – a division of IBEC the Irish Builders and Employers Confederation which is Ireland's foremost voice on business representing the interests of 7500 companies, and which exerts considerable influence on government strategic and budgetary decisions. IFFPA's members include among others Coillte, major sawmilling firms including Glennon Bros. and Murrays, all the major private forestry companies including Greenbelt, the Association of Irish Forestry Consultants (AIFC) and the Smurfit Kappa Group.

Irish Farmers Association (IFA) – Ireland's largest farm organisation and arguably one of the most powerful trade lobby groups in the

The new 2015 -2020 Forestry Programme incorporates the following schemes:

- Afforestation
- Agroforestry
- Forestry for Fibre
- Forest Road Scheme
- Native Woodland Establishment
- Native Woodland Conservation
- Woodland Improvement
- Reconstitution Scheme (Replacing ash crop after dieback)

country has an overall membership of 85,000, and has had a highly effective Farm Forestry Section for nearly 25 years now, employing a full-time forester to advise its members for the past 15 years.

Irish Timber Growers Association (ITGA) – The lobby groups had and have significant access to leading politicians including the Minister for Agriculture and Junior Minister for Forestry and as a result were able to secure more favourable terms and conditions plus significant increases to the proposed grant and premium rates published in the in the draft. Initially for example an annual tax-free premium of €470 per hectare for Sitka spruce paid for 15 years had been proposed, the lobby groups succeeded in getting this increased to €510 per hectare.

The new programme which aims to afforest 43,000ha during the term of the programme continues the tradition which started in the mid 90s of having five-year programmes thus allowing all stakeholders and especially nurseries to develop and produce realistic plans and budgets for the next five years.

Forestry for farmers: a change in mindset

Attitudes to forestry from the farming community have improved immeasurably over the past ten years for two main reasons:

Firstly, due to the positive influence of the Farm Forestry Section in the IFA which has the same status as the Dairy Section, Sheep Section, Tillage Section etc. within the organisation aided by the presence of the IFA's full-time forester.

Second is the positive effect associated with the first thinning of private plantations planted between 1994 and 2000. Farmers who planted during this period and were happy to qualify for 20 years tax-free premiums never expecting that their first thinnings would make €8 -12 standing, because back in the mid-nineties first thinnings had at best a neutral value. Now their plantations are being harvested at 15 years, they still have five years premiums to go, and a second thinning to look forward to before the premiums finish. It is hard to overestimate the positive, promotional effect this is having on potential new

growers, and how timber is slowly but surely being viewed as another farm crop or enterprise to be managed alongside cereals or stock. This in itself represents a fundamental and significant change in the mindset towards forestry on Irish farms, and is reflected in yearly afforestation levels of 6500-7000ha despite having large areas of the countryside categorised as environmentally sensitive where planting is now prohibited.

Positive forestry taxation changes

The forest industry lobby groups recorded another significant victory in the recent budget when they succeeded in restoring the tax-free status of timber revenues which had been progressively eroded in the past nine years. Prior to 2006, all timber sales revenue from forests was exempt from Income Tax. A threshold of €250,000 was then introduced after which all revenues above that figure would be subject to tax. By 2010 this threshold had been reduced to €80,000. With a typical hectare of Sitka spruce producing clearfell revenues of €25,000 - €35,000 during this period private growers were finding it increasingly difficult to plan their clearfells so as to avoid Income Tax. However, following a lobbying campaign which targeted key political figures the government announced in the October 2015 budget that the threshold was being removed, and timber sales from forests would enjoy tax free status again. Growers can now fell and sell any quantity of timber without having to pay Income Tax.

Timber Prices

Timber prices improved considerably in Q1 of this year compared to Q4 of 2014, with standing clearfell lots in the size range .5 -6m³ achieving prices of €70-75/m³ compared to €55/m³ in Q4 2014. However, prices have softened considerably since with the same log size making €59/m³ in Q3 2015 leaving the average price for thinnings and clearfell standing sales in all categories from .2m³ to 1.0m³ in Q3 2015 practically the same as Q3 2014 at €57/m³.

Timber at roadside is currently trading at €35 for pulp, €55 for pallet and €75 for sawlog. First thinning's are still in great demand, with active competition between the panelboard sector and the general woodfuel & biomass sector keeping prices at very acceptable levels. Conifer first thinnings standing are selling from €8/m³ to 12/m³ with choice lots making up to €15/m³.

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“Three times more wood is key to quality fencing”

says **Olly Bennett** of Cornwall’s Duchy Timber

According to Duchy Timber in Cornwall, which has been making fencing panels from local wood for decades, the key to good fencing is using more wood and the right kind of pressure treatment.

Olly Bennett, manager at Duchy Timber, said: “We use three times more wood than you’d find in an average DIY or trade panel in all of our fencing to make it hard-wearing, durable and reliable. We use local wood, sourced from sustainably managed forests within 50 miles of our sawmill. It’s some of the best quality timber in the UK and we are lucky enough to have it on our doorstep.”

The local wood is milled into blocks at Duchy Timber’s sawmill in Lostwithiel. The blocks are then ‘multi-ripped’ on its six-head Stenner saw into panel battens and slats. Each batten and panel is then pressure-treated on site prior to assembly. Duchy Timber uses Wolman’s® on all treated timber.

“Most cheaper fencing will be dipped in treatment before delivery but this will only protect the wood for a very short time. Pressurised treatment with the appropriate kind of treatment will ensure the fencing lasts for years, repelling wood moulds and wood eating insects as well as protecting from rot. Pressure treating on site allows all the processes to happen at the sawmill, keeping log miles down.

“We treat timber to different ‘classes’ depending on what they are required to do - and it’s vital to get it right and have a clear understanding of what exactly the fencing will be used for and its positioning,” added Olly. “For fencing that does not have ground contact, we use Class 3. This could include gates, slats or gazebos. But fencing that does have ground or fresh water contact, such as posts, needs a Class 4 to extend its life. We also use a special heavy duty highway fencing treatment to meet high-ways specification if required.”

Once treated in Duchy Timber’s pressurised treatment tank, the battens and panels are dried and then assembled on a new automated panel machine. This new machine, recently delivered to Duchy Timber, has seen production at the sawmill jump by 500%. Each panel is also checked by eye for quality control purposes. The company can now make up to 250 panels a day.

Duchy Timber offers a made-to-order bespoke service that allows any kind of fencing to be made to any size or design. The most popular designs include feather edge, hit and miss, palisade, T&G and waney edge fencing. These can be made in softwoods and hardwoods at Duchy Timber’s sawmill in Lostwithiel.

Established in 1958, Duchy Timber it was recently purchased by Premier Forest Group.



Heavy duty overlap panels and, top, Olly Bennett

Association “acts to correct misperceptions” about BS

In May 2014 BSI published a new version of the wood preservation standard BS 8417:2011 + A1: 2014. The main change in this edition was the strengthening of the 30 year desired service life (dsl) specification for use class 4 (ground contact) timber treated with BS EN 599 type preservatives.

The move followed collaborative work by the Wood Protection Association (WPA) Technical Committee, the major preservative manufacturers and its members producing wood for highways contracts. This work highlighted that the performance of longer service life sawn posts may potentially be compromised by exposed heartwood surfaces.

Variability in the natural durability of heartwood was a significant factor contributing to the strengthening the specification says WPA director, Steve Young.

It is important to note that the new standard does not require an increase in preservative retention over what was previously required for 30 year dsl. To ensure adequate protection the penetration class has been increased by one step from NP5 to NP6 for 30 year use class 4 specifications for sawn wood with exposed heartwood faces. This means that for species with sapwood classed as “permeable” (among the softwoods this applies only to pine) full sapwood penetration and 6mm penetration of any exposed heartwood must be achieved. In species with sapwood resistant to impregnation 12mm sapwood penetration and 6mm penetration of exposed heartwood is required.

“Ever since WPA first alerted treaters to BSI’s plans for the 30 year specification in 2012 we have been at pains to make clear that the focus was on achieving the new penetration requirements” says Steve Young who adds that WPA is keen to emphasise that any process by which

this is achieved is acceptable: “Incising is just one technique by which the depth of penetration in heartwood can be achieved, other techniques can and are being used – the perception that mechanical incising is the only way to compliance is incorrect.”

Correcting the misperception

Some fencing contractors believe that only posts that have been incised will satisfy the Highways Agency contract manual and WPA continues to take action to try to set the record straight. Steve Young says that one possible source of the misperception is the National Highways Sector Scheme 2a Fencing document published by UKAS in November 2014. This included a ‘note’ for information stating that contractors should expect to see incised wood supplied to meet the new 30-year specification.

Earlier this year WPA set about trying to get this note corrected. An alternative form of words focused on penetration rather than incising was presented to the SS2a advisory committee and accepted. WPA is now lobbying hard for UKAS to amend and republish the note for information which should be a major help to correct the misperception about compliance with national



Right: Cross section samples of pine 30 yr dsl posts sprayed with copper reagent reveals the preservative penetration achieved without incising.

FROM THE WPA BLOG

Why the changes?

British standard classification of natural durability is based on the heartwood of a species and, as a consequence of the increasing variability, the performance of longer service life sawn posts may be compromised by exposed heartwood surfaces. Such surfaces are resistant to preservative penetration and hence may be under-treated. Fence posts sawn from a species like Douglas fir, for example, are likely to have a high proportion of heartwood on exposed faces. The 30 yr desired service life specification in BS8417:2014 was upgraded to require exposed heartwood faces to be penetrated with preservative to 6 mm in addition to sapwood penetration requirements.

Accounting for substrate variability

An Acceptable Quality Level (AQL) is applied to penetration requirements within BS 8417. Typically for resistant species the AQL is set at 25%. In addition, even within the 75% of samples which must pass, the enhanced heartwood penetration required for a 30 year desired service life is only required to be visible in 75% of the exposed surface area of that heartwood.

Achieving the new requirements

Any process that results in the achievement of the 6mm heartwood penetration requirement may be used. Mechanical incising is mentioned in the standard as one example of a technique which has been used in the past to help enhance preservative penetration in resistant species. Unfortunately, some specifiers and contractors have interpreted this wording as requiring that incising must be used in order to satisfy the new 30 year specification which is not correct. **Penetration is the key factor and any method of achieving the requirements of this revised standard is the responsibility of the timber treater.**

Changes to timber treatment standards, a critical view

In April 2014 a new version of BS 8417, the UK standard for treated timber was published, the main changes concerned a strengthening of the 30 year desired service life specification for use class 4 (in ground contact) treated timber. Changes to the standard focus on chemical penetration.

For products in ground contact, with a desired service life requirement of 30 years, the standard requires 6mm penetration in exposed heartwood of Douglas fir and larch. It seems to imply that the only, or at least the best, route to compliance for achieving a 30 year desired service life is through incising.

The standard states: "Heartwood is difficult to treat (regardless of sapwood permeability) and even where a use class/desired service life combination does not include a requirement for penetration in heartwood, consideration is to be given to the advantages of special measures, such as incising, to improve penetration.

In addition to this the National Highways Sector Schemes for Quality Management in Highways Works, 2A, part 7.4.3) states that: "Contractors installing timber highways fencing (and environmental barriers) whose material were subject to contract after May 2014 should expect to find that timber to be installed in ground contact has been INCISED before treatment."

This has created a great deal of confusion and misunderstanding about what is actually required. Is it about penetration or is it about incising?

Many treaters have now invested in expensive incising technology in order to meet the Highways Agency Standard. There are a number of companies supplying a variety of incising machines into the market. This has created further issues. Incising techniques have not been standardised – there are some bad examples of incised timber on the market that does not meet penetration requirements but are acceptable under NHSS2a.

The WPA, in their durability trials, have reported a number of times the need for more work on penetration of larch and Douglas fir heartwood: "During the preparation of incised and treated

samples, it became apparent that, whilst eminently suitable for spruce and pine heartwood, existing, commercially available incising techniques do not yet provide a sufficiently consistent enhancement of preservative penetration in larch and Douglas fir heartwood." (WPA Newsletter on Durability trials)

Questions that need to be asked:

- Has a British Standard been changed without the technical evidence to support change?
- How can industry be expected to comply if the experts in the field of timber treatment are themselves having difficulties achieving the standard?
- What Standard is industry aiming for – Penetration or Incising?

Comment from Craig Leitch, Charles Ransford and Son Ltd:

"The WPA must accept responsibility for the confusion they have created around these standards, after all the WPA not only chair the committee that instigated changes to BS8417, focusing on penetration, but also chair the NHSS2a committee which ignored penetration and focused on incising. There was no consist-

ency in their approach.

"It is also interesting to note that the WPA, in their field trials, is finding it challenging to meet the penetration criteria of the new standard. Perhaps it would have been more prudent to consider changes to the standards after field trial data was available. That way industry could have invested in the correct technology with confidence".



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New materials for 'greener' tree shelters

Rainbow Professional has introduced plant-derived thermoplastic biopolymers into its portfolio of raw materials. These will be used to manufacture a new range of environmentally-friendly products for the forestry, landscaping, amenity, viticulture, fruit growing and horticultural markets. The biopolymers have been specially blended for converting into the next generation of improved modular tree shelters, sapling protectors and tree stakes together with pest control management systems as carriers of pheromones, attractants and repellents.

Rainbow says the biopolymer and additives are made from renewable and sustainable natural resources that claim to provide "a natural product that is biodegradable, compostable and has the lowest carbon foot print of any plastic in use today".

The manufacture of these new products using these materials for

extrusion or injection moulding has accelerated a new generation of bioplastics for Rainbow.

Rainbow says it needed to provide its customers "with a real alternative material that would impact on the circle economy (design, manufacture, use, disposal) and reduce the costs incurred when the products reach the end of their life cycle. The markets told us of their frustrations when products had to be removed from the trees and shrubs in order for them to continue to grow naturally. They told us of the cost of labour to remove the items, clean them, bundle them up and then pay to have the bundles of waste shipped to recycling centres, landfill or for destruction in incinerators."

The properties of biopolymers allow bacteria, enzymes and fungi to biodegrade and disintegrate the material at the later stages of the designed shelf life of the product.

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Forest market report by **Fenning Welstead**, of John Clegg & Co



John Clegg & Co partnered Tilhill Forestry in producing the UK Forest Market Report for 2015. This was launched on 17 November and some of the information in the report is repeated in this article.

2015 was the most active year we have recorded. If we focus on woodlands in excess of 20ha in size and predominantly coniferous commercial crops, then almost 100 forests were sold, covering a total of 18,435ha, with an average price of £8145 per hectare. We concluded that this meant an annual rise in values of about 22%. We also noted that the IPD Index reported 18.4%. The statistical analysis of the forestry market is based on relatively few transactions and it is not surprising that the percentages are not precise. The salient point we can take from this is that, once again, the forestry property market has had a very good year.

In terms of the market place, it was an unusual year with the sale of the UPM Forestry Portfolio. This extended to 7100ha of commercial coniferous plantation. It was sold at an overall price of £50M, which equates to just over £7000 per hectare.

Other individual sales of note and worthy

of mention, both in terms of scale and interest level, would be Auchencairn near Dumfries, extending to 1120ha, which sold for £12.5M. With an average age of 24, this was one of the best productive woodlands that had come to the market in recent years and this is reflected in the price that was achieved - in excess of £11,000 per hectare.

Looking to a younger aged crop, one might mention Stonechest. This is a very commercial property, extending to 224ha that had been clear-felled of its original crop over the last 15 years and now presented itself as a young restocked forest with a range of age classes with an average age of about nine years. This attracted strong interest at a competitive closing date and sold for just over £9500 per hectare. There are two points of note about Stonechest. One is that the young crop was well established and this was an ideal investment for medium to long-term capital growth with low maintenance and management input. The second point is that it was in Cumbria and there is, undoubtedly, a Scottish-English split in terms of levels of interest. The political scene in Scotland is unsettling to some people.

Returning to large-scale forestry. Rosal Forest in Sutherland extends to 2400ha and is one of the largest single blocks of forestry that has been presented to the market. With an average age of 28, Rosal presents a very different proposition. Not only is it very far north and, therefore, distant from markets, but the local haulage infrastructure presents considerable challenges. This property sold for £1.5M, equivalent to

£620 per hectare. Quite a different value class to south Scotland.

Talking of scale; of course, the Forestry Commission's extensive woods at The Barracks Forest, Rannoch in Perthshire, extends in total to 4477ha and is currently on offer with a guide price of £8.9M. This is equivalent to under £2000 per hectare; this, for a forest that was planted largely in the 1960s to 1970s, which is full of timber ripe for harvesting. Given the scale of The Barracks, there must also be some alternative use potential.

Wales and southern England

This region has seen a continuing strong market for commercial conifer woodlands. Whilst some offerings in south-west England have not readily found buyers due to perceived difficulties with access and distance from markets, the sale of Upcott Wood (56ha) in West Devon, attracted strong interest, eventually achieving a figure in excess of £12,300 per hectare. This was a beautifully presented, late-rotation conifer wood, managed by Bill Blight for c.40 years. 59ha of heavily stocked, mature Douglas fir and Sitka spruce in Cornwall did not even get to the market, with the leasehold interest selling at nearly £10,000 per hectare. Woods with a reasonable percentage of broadleaved restocked crops were notably less appealing to the market.

Larger blocks of mixed woods in the southern counties of England have continued to do well. Laughton Woods in East Sussex achieved over £12,000 per hectare for 69ha. High Scrubs in Hertfordshire saw very strong bidding, resulting in over £14,800 per hectare on its 49ha. This reflected the lack of substantial woodland opportunities in the Home Counties.

Several smaller woodland sales including Shawbry Wood, 12ha in Northumberland; Old Covert Wood, 10ha in Derbyshire and Fair Table Wood, 15ha in North Yorkshire, sold at between £6670 and £11,100 per hectare.

While it's been a buoyant year in the forestry market we believe there are clear signs of strong differences now appearing between those forests that are in the very commercial baskets of South Scotland, Northern England and Wales compared to those elsewhere, that often have challenging issues alongside distance from markets. It must also be a distinct possibility that after eight years of strong capital growth we are reaching a plateau to draw breath. Looking back ten years it's been a steep climb.

There is, to an extent, a slight disconnect between property prices and spot market timber prices. Timber prices have softened as a result of exchange rate pressures and other changes to tariffs across the timber trading world. While we all believe that the long term prospect for timber is good, have we begun to reach a point where forestry prices are as strong as they need to be?

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UK producers still dogged by global oversupply and strong pound

Timber Auctions market report by **Oliver Combe**



The strong pound continues to have a severe impact on the home grown timber producers. The world market has an oversupply of timber and the UK remains an attractive market for shippers due to a very strong pound and reasonable activity levels.

Globally, the 2nd and 3rd quarters of 2015 have seen an oversupply of softwood lumber on the world market due to a slowdown in demand in Russia, China and now the USA. The major producers have been quick to react to the oversupply situation and have taken steps to reduce mill outputs and focus efforts on reducing stock levels in the supply chain

The production cutbacks put in place in Q3 have started to reduce supplies and are bringing some stability back into the market. The US softwood market saw falls of 7 – 20 % from July to mid September 2015, stability at the end of September and have now seen a gradual creep back upwards of prices in October. In early November prices are still creeping upwards but are 3 -5 % below where they were in November 2014.

UK softwoods

Imported timber continues to set the price in the UK market and to increase its market share. Not only are the domestic producers under pressure on price they are finding their market share being eroded. This together with the normal seasonal slowdown in November and on through the winter months has forced many mills to look carefully at their production levels. Efforts are being made to reduce throughput and concentrate on managing stock so that stock levels can

be brought into line with demand. It is tough times for UK mills especially those in the Kiln-dried carcassing sector.

Current market conditions

In 'normal' years, logs prices start to be adjusted downwards in the winter due to reduced demand and this has been the pattern this autumn. A quick summary of prices is shown in the table for guidance only.

These prices are intended for guidance only and will vary locally according to available supplies, local demand competition to buy.

Standing prices have held up reasonably well as the industry has sought to find work for contractors and hauliers to keep infrastructure in place. The real pine has been felt in prime saw-log crops where due to the difficulty in moving these into sawmills buyers have been very cautious in offering for this type of parcel and have instead focused on more varied crops which produce a wide variety of products. These sorts of crops allow the purchaser and contractor better scope to manage production to suit market opportunities.

Despite the shock that has been felt this year with falling prices and reduced demand it is interesting to reflect that these prices are still considerably ahead of those being achieved in the early 2000's and do still provide good stumpage prices.

Whilst the market is quiet the processors continue to demonstrate their commitment to the industry by investing in their production facilities. The current round of investments is less about increasing through put and more about improving versatility of sites to cope with a wider range of logs sizes and species at the same time as customer requirements change.

A&J Scott have last winter completed the installation of a EWD bandsaw and edger line for large logs and are now carrying out a major upgrade of their main saw line. The old 3D scanner and double arbour circular saw system

will be replaced with a new Soderham Ericson bandsaw installation.

This will consist of a new 3D scanner with auto rotation of the logs and a side shifting log infeed system to fully automate position of the sawlogs as they are fed into the main sawrig. A factory reconditioned reducer quad bandsaw will be installed in the main sawline with a new Catech 400 3 bladed edger. Whilst carrying this work out Milltech will also replace the whole mills control system including the sawn timber sorting system and co – products handling process.

These two sawlines give A&J Scott the ability to handle a wide range of log lengths, diameters and species and will provide a valuable market for mixed conifers as well as spruce in the North of England.

P Irving and sons of Hutton Roof sawmill in Cumbria have recently installed a band and carriage line to deal with oversized logs, upgraded their edging system and continue to invest in improving the productivity of their sawmill.

Pontrilas Timber in Hereford have installed a new Holtec log scanning and sorting line which is three times faster than their old log sorting line.

In Ireland Murray timber are planning to install new 3d scanners and new kiln chambers whilst ECC have recently installed a new post incising machine.

Hardwoods

The hardwood market is just getting going for this winter and the first parcels have hit the market. Despite the strength of the pound the market for good quality oak remains excellent, especially for FSC certified material.

Firewood has been quiet over the summer but has picked up this autumn; what we need is a spell of good cold autumn weather to really get the firewood market going. The market price has been around the £45-48 per tonne at roadside level for processor-sized 'white' hardwood recently, but parcels have reached £55 per tonne when purchasers need to buy.

An interesting pattern that has developed with roadside firewood is that local markets stagnate at a level, however, there is always a buyer somewhere who has been let down or is short of stock and needs to buy. Recent sales on Timber Auctions have demonstrated the value of marketing firewood to a wider audience as buyers from out of area have come in and bought parcels at £5-10 per tonne above the established price. It is always worth testing the open market with some parcels each year.

Timber Auctions has had excellent sales recently of roadside firewood, oak sawlogs and standing softwood and would welcome further parcels from owners, agents and growers.

MARKET SUMMARY

Product	Price	Demand
Spruce sawlogs	£50 per tonne delivered	Slow
Mixed conifer sawlogs	£45 – 50 per tonne delivered	Slow
Pallet wood	£40 - £45 per tonne delivered	Fair to Good
Small roundwood	£32 – 35 per tonne delivered	Good
Fencing	£50 per tonne delivered	Good

If you wish to discuss parcels of timber you would like to discuss or for further information please contact Oliver Combe on 07771 958975, oliver.combe@timberauctions.co.uk for free independent marketing advice.

Market settles after period of readjustment

Euroforest Timber
Market report by
Graeme Ralph



What a difference a year makes! Although there were signs emerging at the end of 2014 that the market might be beginning to slacken off it was a record year in terms of profitability for the harvesting and sawmill sector, but also, vitally, in terms of returns to growers. Today it is difficult to paint such a rosy picture. The slow-down in the market, driven by exchange rates, which led to a reduction in construction timber demand, predominantly affecting the big carcassing mills in the North, left the southern mills relatively unaffected as they continued to experience strong demand for their main products which are in the fencing sector. The northern mills then began to target this market in order to maintain volumes, and the competition from

them in the fencing sector has now started to cause problems for the traditional fencing mills. The result: reduced log prices which started in the North have now spread throughout the majority of the UK.

In the pallet sector life is difficult as they experience pressure from the carcassing mills flooding their customers with cheap side boards which are the pallet mills' bread and butter, whilst at the other end small roundwood prices force the pallet mills to maintain their roundwood prices at levels higher than they would wish. As a result, many mills are running at reduced capacity until the good times come round again.

Small roundwood has been the saviour of many standing sales during 2015 as demand here, driven in part by the growing biomass sector, has kept prices high, which in many cases has helped to balance out the fall in log prices. Unfortunately, there are now signs – in the North at least – that price is beginning to come under pressure, particularly for those board producers who rely on a high proportion of export

sales to keep their plants busy.

The good news with all of the above is that, unlike the last time our industry suffered a downturn, there is good overall demand for wood products as construction is going well. We have been going through a period of readjustment of prices during 2015 as the domestic industry attempts to align its prices with those of imported wood products, and as all but the very youngest of those in our industry know, this is simply part of the normal cyclical nature of prices as a result of the world trade in wood. Domestic prices have now reached a level at which they are competitive with imports, and although the next few months are likely to be flat as we get through the winter, once construction picks up again in the Spring we would expect demand and price to strengthen once again.

What is vital now is that wherever possible, the woodland owners who have benefited from the record returns of recent times continue to support the timber industry at the reduced price levels we are now experiencing, so that we all continue to have a vibrant sector for the future.

UK forest certification standards reviewed

Certification update
by Confor
Technical Director
Andrew Heald



October 2015 was a significant month for forestry certification in the UK, with revision drafts of the two main standards, being open for consultation. These were the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS), and FSC's Chain of Custody Standard, the former on its regular five-year cycle, the latter for the first time in over ten years.

UKWAS

Confor has had significant input into the revision of UKWAS and there is now greater simplicity particularly around deadwood, and natural reserves. The layout of 'requirements' has also improved, they are now all bundled in one section. Confor shared the new requirements with the forestry sector at the Confor Woodland Show in September in Wiltshire, and the feedback from this consultation, was part of the formal submission. Approximately 30 separate comments and submissions have been received, which will be reviewed and considered by the drafting committee. UKWAS also needs to be reviewed by both FSC & PEFC to ensure that it continues to meet

their international standards; a finalized version should be in place by Autumn 2016.

FSC

The FSC Chain of Custody impacts every organization trading certified timber or other forest products, with approximately 3000 certificate holders in the UK. The Chain of Custody standard has been under the spotlight for a number of years, following the proposal for an Online Claims Platform (OCP), which was originally proposed in 2010. The OCP would require all companies to register every transaction of certified timber, and was widely rejected by all sections of the industry. OCP has slowly changed into Transactional Verification, and was consulted as part of the revised Chain of Custody.

Confor has been fully engaged in the consultation process from the start and has made a number of proposals to simplify the standard and offered better, cheaper alternatives to OCP.

It is fundamental requirement that Forest Certification reflects the low-risk nature of UK Forestry, which is already heavily regulated. Companies in the supply chain and some customers want a mechanism that enables them to understand & communicate that the products are legal and sustainable. Confor is continually pushing for a risk-adjusted approach, which targets resource in the right areas and focuses on Forest Management outcomes rather than simply checking paper work of increasingly bureaucratic management systems.

Woodland owners are 'missing out on millions'

A multi million pound hole in the rural economy has been uncovered by a survey, which reveals farmers and landowners across England are missing out on millions of pounds of untapped income.

The full extent of this missed opportunity, which is due to landowners failing to reap the rewards of woodfuel and other timber grown on their land, has been revealed by an England-wide survey conducted by the Forestry Commission.

The survey found that 45% of land owners consider their woodland to be less profitable than other parts of their land – with more than a quarter (28%) saying they don't use their woodlands to generate additional income from the sale of timber, woodfuel or to benefit from reduced heating costs for their own homes and businesses. With the forestry sector already contributing £4.1bn to the overall UK economy, this missed opportunity represents millions of pounds in additional lost revenue, says the Forestry Commission.

FC's 2015 Forestry Statistics revealed that deliveries of UK roundwood (softwood and hardwood) in 2014 totalled 11.4m green tonnes. Forestry experts expect this trend to continue rising due to the increase in demand for woodfuel. But while this steady increase is encouraging, it demonstrates that a significant number of woodland owners have yet to understand that potential revenue source on their doorstep.



Alert for spruce aphids

Managers of spruce plantations are advised to be alert for the effects of green spruce aphids (*Elatobium abietinum*). Symptoms have been observed by our aerial surveillance programme this year in a number of woodlands and forests, particularly along the Welsh Marches and in northern England.

The weather and, more specifically, cold winter temperatures, are the main checking influence on population levels of *E abietinum*. However, the recent warm winters have enabled population levels to increase to the point where the effects they are having on their favoured host genera of spruce (*Picea species*) can be easily identified.

The aphid is a sap sucker, and feeds on previous years' foliage during spring and summer, resulting in chlorosis (yellowing) of the needles after feeding. The pattern

of needle loss can appear in different parts of the tree, depending on its age. In younger Sitka spruce trees (ie up to about five years old) the attack can appear to be focused in the upper crown, whereas in mature trees it will be in the lower portions.

Control in woodland environments cannot be achieved using insecticides because of the unacceptable effects on non-target species and, ultimately, the forest ecosystem, as well as the prohibitive costs involved. Control is therefore best achieved by creating an environment conducive to predator species such as lacewings, soldier beetles, ladybirds and hoverfly larvae. Forest Research agency researching ways in which managers can make their woods more conducive to the natural enemies of spruce tree pests.

P ramorum latest

Scotland New outbreaks of *P ramorum* have been found in Angus and Perthshire. Confor is working with FC Scotland to enable faster dissemination of news to identify where new pest and disease threats have been found.

England The FC continued its programme of aerial surveys over the summer to monitor *P ramorum*. Results have been generally encouraging, with no significantly

large or new areas of symptoms being observed.

However, two notable findings include confirmation of infection on larch in Yorkshire for the first time.

The site is in an FC-managed woodland near Easingwold in North Yorkshire. There has also been a recent suspect finding on mature sweet chestnut in Cornwall. www.forestry.gov.uk/pramorom

BRIEFING

Chalara

Chalara dieback of ash (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) disease has now been confirmed in over 30% of each 10 km square grid square across England and 12% of Wales. The FC is updating its Chalara management advice leaflets to take into account the most recent developments in its distribution and progression. These will be distributed at their programme of plant health events around England. A PDF version will be available in the 'Related documents' section of www.forestry.gov.uk/chalara

Oak processionary moth (OPM)

Surveillance and control work has been carried out this year – in spring over 250 sites known to be infested were treated with insecticide, and more than 50,000 trees were surveyed over the summer. An extensive pheromone trapping programme followed in late summer around the peripheries of the London outbreaks, in the Pangbourne area, and along a 'corridor' between West London and Pangbourne. Although OPM has been found in new areas, FC remains confident that the control programme has continued to limit its population, impacts and rate of spread. www.forestry.gov.uk/opm

New pest alerts released by the FC

The Forestry Commission has released two new pest alerts – plane wilt (canker stain disease) and *Xylella fastidiosa*. A copy can be downloaded on the FC publications website.

Mine's an austrocedri please!

The Observatree website has published a new post by Joan Webber, principal pathologist at Forest Research, who asks: "With *Phytophthora austrocedri* posing an increasing threat to our juniper trees, will we soon be calling time on gin o'clock?"

www.observatree.org.uk/mines-an-austrocedri-please

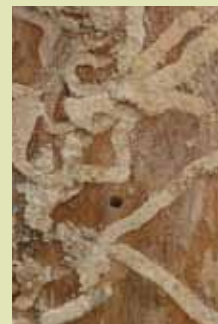
Pest Risk Analysis

The UK Plant Health Service has recently published several new risk assessments for organisms which could potentially pose a risk to the natural environment, forestry/woodland and ornamental sectors. Information available to download at: <https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/phiw/riskRegister/plant-health/pest-risk-analysis-consultations.cfm>

Contingency planning

Confor has recently responded to the draft Contingency Plans for the Emerald Ash Borer (*Agrilus planipennis*) – right – and Sweet chestnut blight (*Cryphonectria parasitica*).

The plans give: official action following a presumptive diagnosis; official action following the confirmation of an outbreak; and pathogen background information. Final Contingency Plans for specific pests and diseases can be found at: www.forestry.gov.uk/pestsanddiseases.



Dendroctonus micans private sector support for FR

Aerial surveillance flights are picking up significant levels of *Dendroctonus micans* in the south-west England. The South West Forestry and Woodland Advisory Committee has written to FC England highlighting the need for a robust breeding programme of *Rhizophagus grandis* (the biological control for *D. micans*) to establish landscape scale inoculation and to disseminate information of how to do it - for future resilience. FC have asked the private sector to contribute to any breeding programme. Confor has asked for a costed programme to justify the legitimate request for private sector input. A request for £5000 per annum has been tabled by the FC.

Keep an eye on the Forestry Commission website for day-by-day developments on the top tree pests and diseases. www.forestry.gov.uk/pestsanddiseases

The Varma Project

Value added by optimal wood raw material allocation & processing

By **Shaun Mochan**, Woodilee Consultancy Ltd and **David Leslie**, James Jones and Sons Ltd

The changing face of the wood industry in Europe meant that a lot of work has been done to better understand the most effective wood supply, sawmill operation and logistics chain to maximise profitability in the industry. Working with the industry, the researchers of the VARMA project are looking to find new ways to increase cost competitiveness through better understanding of customer needs and a more effective networking structure.

Wood Allocation Centre (WAC) – networking, streamlining, optimization

Solutions for the challenge are sought through Wood allocation centre – a concept proposed at the VARMA project with following objectives:

1. Introduction of radically novel customer-oriented business models and services
2. Higher wood raw material utilisation ratio and improved value yield
3. Means for increased cooperation (i.e. flexibility and efficiency) via networking within wood value chains.

The project goal is to develop a customer-driven value chains and wood raw material allocation system by implementing a smart bucking center for stems.

Originating from different national needs, the business concept for a WAC is being developed in Finland, Germany, the UK and France by 12 partners from the industry and research organisations. The WAC can be either a virtual entity or a physical structure (ie organisation or facility), where logs are cut to length according to customers' (eg sawmills, plywood mills) needs.

Differences in regional situations cause different (regional) demands and different strategies to establish WAC. One of the key aspects to ensuring optimisation of wood raw material resources is to get pre-information of stand properties, where promising research results can be expected. New technologies, however, are only one aspect in overcoming bottlenecks in the wood supply chain. Organisational and/or informational aspects are important too, by designing wood value chain networks around the WAC, as well as new services to support efficient raw material supply and value creation.

The WAC use indicators that can be described and assessed and which, when observed periodically, can be useful in identifying trends. The indicators are wood value, product priority, demand issues, wood availability, harvest costs, extraction factors, haulage and stacking room.

Information flows within the wood value chain can be improved by analysing demand specifications for data and knowledge between harvesting and sawmill.

The UK's case study is looking at timelines before and after the harvesting operations have started, to ensure that the maximum advantage comes to the grower or forest owner and the buyer, the saw miller.

The industry can do this by 3D scanning the forest to ensure we can capture the attributes of the harvest area, and using 3D stem profiling and simulation cutting to understand what can be cut. This is taken into account during harvest operations and utilised to maximise the value dependent on the market at that time.

Methodology and approach

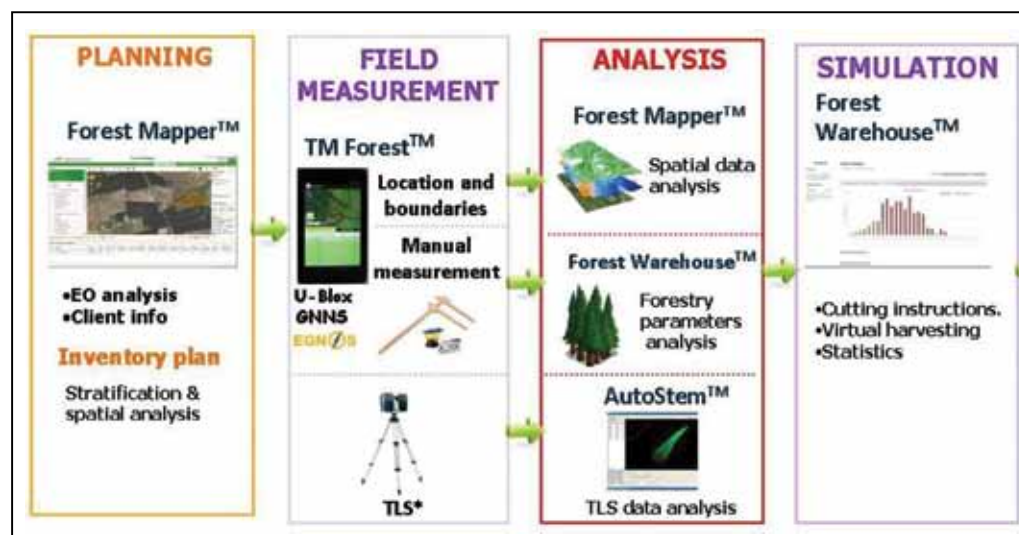
Understanding the process flows allow for better understanding of the value chain, how it is constructed and where weaknesses can arise or be shown. See Typical workflow diagram.

Using various new technologies including laser tree scanning to increase knowledge of the forest resource and carrying this forward to each stage of the process, we can maintain and improve the value of wood supply by directing products to the most appropriate end users. Monitoring of these systems can be undertaken by use of simple and novel satellite systems such as Real Time Forest Intelligence (RTFI).



The RTFI Web interface system allows for users to monitor the cut to length harvesting machines individually or collectively. Crop yield and the actual harvest machine production are available for analysis off site in 'real time'. The harvest manager can send instruction files to the harvester machines In Vehicle Device (IVD) so that the machine operator knows what work needs to be done at that time. The CTL harvester machine data is available as it cuts the trees, which means that the forest owner or harvest manager can always have a steady flow of information from the harvester machine. The generation of reports on the yield performance of the CTL harvester machine via web-based GUI helps to streamline the process and bring even further efficiencies.

Understanding the forest to be felled in all



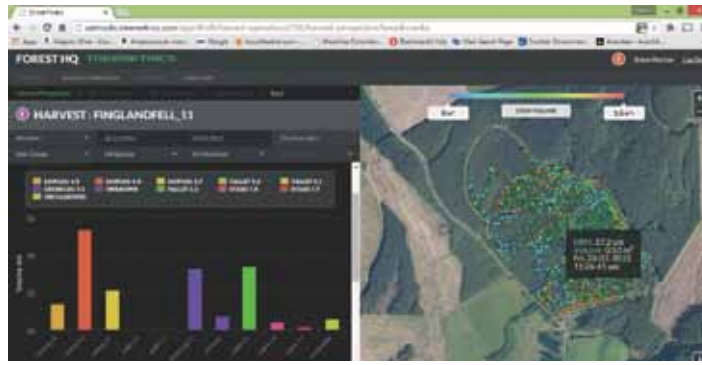
Technology in the forest

I was most interested by the North-Rhine Westphalia "Der Virtuelle Wald" project as detailed in the October issue of FTN. This overall approach is one which has much to recommend it in the context of enhanced current and future British forestry practice. In particular, it will support modelling and interpretation of the outcomes of major changes to species selection and silvicultural systems that are required to convert currently immature British plantation forest resources to a more sustainable and resilient long-term basis. Virtual forestry will complement the role of shorter-term operational field trials, while providing 'advance intelligence' of the likely results from longer-term experiments, where these are instigated.

Responses published in the October issue rightly point out that this is a more detailed and intensive approach to forest management than we have been used to in Britain recently, and that this brings with it the likelihood of additional costs. In the short-medium term this can be accommodated by only applying modelling and visualization tools to a suite of exemplar 'virtual demonstration forests' representing broad classes of the overall resource - plantation Sitka, native pinewood, mixed conifers etc. Modelling environments now required embrace climate and soils, pests, silviculture, yield, carbon, harvesting, economics and finance, biodiversity, landscape and social benefits. Outputs can be extrapolated onto wider classes of forest resources with an intermediate level of site data collection and calibration required.

Whether bespoke application of virtual forestry techniques to all holdings (including 'midget forests') is necessary is a moot point. However, in the longer term we should all recognise that we need to "raise our forestry game" towards that of our German counterparts, putting in place the necessary higher standards of survey enumeration, mensuration, monitoring and precision silviculture. While this may incur costs for initial installation and repeat surveys, these are prerequisites for any truly sustainable multi-rotational forest management. In truth, we are seriously under-investing at present, not least in our forestry education and training.

Dr. Scott McG Wilson MICFor, MRICS
Chartered Forester and Chartered Surveyor,
Aberdeen



Left: The RTFI Web interface system allows for users to monitor the cut to length harvesting machines individually or collectively.

Above: Real-time monitoring of harvesting

Below: Typical workflow



aspects of potential breakout as and when the harvest operation takes place is vital to improve the versatility of the stand and current markets, which in turn includes the sawmill stocks and customer demands.

Knowing the value within the forest using technology (linked to the stem file data within each harvester) offers more flexibility and control in how managers can use the data and, more importantly, the timber.

Real-time monitoring of harvesting

The advantage of this is effective control by harvesting managers giving a better understanding of products cut to suit the markets and of waste element for each forest; this allows for better use of the right machine for the right harvesting operation.

Seeing the location and breakout of different species can also aid in the management process by pre-planning operations in relation to the market demands for species and log products. The additional information in the process of the gives more flexibility as to what can or should be cut, dependant on market demand.

Being able to adjust to the market is imperative to maximise the wood value. Being able to see changes in the market and adapt within a day is important to all parts of the supply chain within the wood market.

The figure below shows change in cutting pattern for one product to swap to another. The specific date shows that 4.9m logs were stopped due to a lack of demand and 4.3m logs were cut. The data gave the sawmill the flexibility to see stock control in the forest and in the sawmill.

Opportunities for the UK sawmilling sector

The UK sawmill industry has developed significantly in the last ten years, with the principal players developing high-value processing units thus maximising yields from short-log harvesting systems. Changes in timber quality, a consolidation towards Sitka spruce and the high demand for wood has forced the sawmill sector to use as much technical advantage as it can find, in order to maximise the utilisation and yield recovery from each log cut.

The issue is with the quality of logs being grown and sawn in the UK. With premature harvesting to meet the current demands and achieve forest rationalisation, the log quality appears to be poorer than in earlier years. New technology in the value chain would allow for better decision-making, giving potentially more opportunities to maximise value from the forest. The sector needs to be able to react with more efficiency to allow for less waste and more productivity, not just at the mill but through the log supply to the mill. Forest growers demand more money for their timber which increases the overall market price for wood as, in turn, the mills seek new markets to maximise their returns.

New methods in determining how we understand the resource and harvest in a more proactive way at each stage is vital to keep in touch with changes in customer (growers and buyers) demands. Being able to understand the forest and accurately predict the log breakout with harvesting operation control in real time can improve the value chain within any EU country.



ENGLAND

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What do members want to discuss for 2016 field meetings?

Please let us know if there are any hot topics that members would like Confor to address for the 2016 regional field meetings and any locations members would like to visit. We normally hold field meetings in each region in spring and autumn. Please contact Caroline Harrison (details above).

Calling all young foresters!

Confor is looking for interested individuals to join Confor's regional Committees. Committees meet up to four times a year and guide the work of Confor in England. Regional Secretary posts are available in The Marches and North of England. Liaising with the England Manager and regional Chairs to organise Committee meetings, distribute meeting papers and write meeting notes. The posts are unpaid but will contribute to ICF PME hours. If you are interested please contact Caroline Harrison (details above).

Consultations

25-year plans for Food and Farming and the Environment – where does forestry sit?

Government is developing two 25-year plans – for Food and Farming and for the Environment. Where does forestry sit? Why are they separate you may ask? Why aren't we writing a 25-year Land Use Plan? All questions that Confor has posed to DEFRA, but, "we are where we are", answers the Government so onwards we forge into another round of consultations. And forestry, well that sits within the 25-year Environment Plan of course! Whatever we may think of our industry's placing the Plan will be a key environmental policy issue of this Parliament, and could shape the direction of natural environment policy in the UK for years to come. We are always keen to hear from members looking get involved, so if you would like to contribute your evidence and ideas please get in touch. Caroline Harrison (details above).

Law Commission review of wildlife law publishes final report

The legal framework for wildlife management is overly complicated, frequently contradictory and unduly prescriptive. Consequently, the law creates unnecessary barriers to effective wildlife management, including the efficient implementation and enforcement of Government policy. The Law Commission published its final report and accompanying draft Bill on 10 November 2015. Confor responded to the consultation. Recommendations include that the patchwork of existing legislation be replaced by a single statute. The new statute brings together the

law governing the protection, control and management of wildlife to make it more consistent, easier to understand and simpler to use. Reflecting relevant EU directives and international conventions as well as national wildlife policy, the statute provides a regulatory framework organised around schedules listing protected and controlled species and prohibited conduct.

www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/wildlife-law/

New look Excellence in Forestry Awards

The RFS Excellence in Forestry Awards are returning to the North of England for 2016 with updated awards reflecting contemporary challenges faced by woodlands large and small. There is also a new and expanded Education and Learning Award for forestry education, training and career development. Full details of the awards and how to enter can be found at www.rfs.org.uk/awards/rfs-excellence-in-forestry-awards/. The deadline for entries is Tuesday 8 March 2016 and an awards event for all winners will be held in July 2016.

Resilience conference presentations

Confor attended the RFS/WT conference on Resilience. There as a range of very interesting speakers. The speakers' presentations can now be viewed at www.rfs.org.uk

South-west of England

Confor members visit Fingle Woods to discuss its future management

Confor undertook a field visit to Fingle Woods, North Dartmoor hosted by The Woodland Trust and The National Trust. Standing looking up at a stand of unthinned Douglas fir, next to an area of old oak coppice, provided an opportunity to discuss the long-term vision for the site. It was a chance to debate woodland management and restoration. What resulted was a very open and engaging debate, with detailed discussion on the practicalities of managing ancient woodland sites with good discussion on; which species to promote, species resilience, CCF and which period of history to take a lead from. It became evident that the real issues of practical management of the site were more complex and interesting than had perhaps been publicised. The

commitment to sharing learning at Fingle, as active management gets restarted, appeared to really capture the interest of those present.

Grown in Britain Group Licensing Scheme on Exmoor

Grown in Britain is trialling a group licensing scheme with Exmoor National Park. The scheme will cover both woodlands and processors. Being in a group scheme reduces auditing costs as the auditors fees are shared between those in the group. If you are interested in being a group member or actually running a group scheme please contact enquiries@growninbritain.org.

Woodland management plan Earned Recognition pilot launches

Bringing more woodland into active management is a priority for the Forestry Commission. They have recognised that new approaches need to be put in place to speed up management plan approval processes. One such approach is Earned Recognition. Within a strict quality assurance framework, they are considering support for those with a good track record in producing UKFS-compliant plans to self-approve. An Earned Recognition programme is being trialled with "Westwoods". The pilot will run for six months with the aim to open up Earned Recognition to a wider group next year.

Marches

Confor hosts a Grey Squirrel Management Day

The Marches Region held a 'Squirrel Management Day' at Cleobury Mortimer Woodland in October in order to discuss and understand, on a practical level, what, if any, additional woodland management approaches might be required in order to attract and maintain a healthy population of pine marten in local woodlands. Huw Denman of Selectfor attended as the resident expert and took us through detailed information relating to suitable habitat, food sources and the common activity of the animal, giving a vivid insight into the species and its habits.

Pine marten appear to be surprisingly robust and their habitat requirements are not particularly demanding, potentially indicating



Members visit Fingle Woods



Grey squirrel day Cleobury Mortimer

that many woodlands across England already have sufficient capacity and food resource to maintain a viable population. One obstacle to this is the broken and disconnected nature of many of our woodland blocks, as pine marten are naturally a woodland species, and do not often forage far beyond a woodlands boundary. Another important point that could be easily overlooked, is the incredibly low density at which pine marten live, being approx. 2 - 3 animals per km², and yet this appears to be sufficient to drastically diminish or eradicate the grey squirrel population locally.

The conclusion from the day was that, whilst the industry is faced with ever more limited resources and protection options to tackle grey squirrels, awareness of pine marten as a native, natural control has re-emerged, and though they may not be a total solution in every part of the country, they offer a substantial change in fortunate in the relentless battle against grey squirrels.

North of England Roots to Prosperity

Confor continues to be instrumental in representing industry in the Roots to Prosperity initiative. We have had excellent support from the Forestry Commission and Local Enterprise Partnerships and our work this year has focused on three areas:

- New productive woodland creation;
- Identifying sources of funding for forestry businesses; and,
- Developing skills and training for the sector.

The main focus this year has been to get the Woodland Productivity Working Group up and running to look at why there has been no new planting of productive woodlands and what can be done to kick start planting of productive woodlands.

The remit has been to identify:

- Land areas which are potentially suitable for creating productive woodlands;
- The process and steps involved in creating a new productive woodland;
- The barriers to creation of new productive woodlands;
- How the application process can be streamlined;
- Identify existing and potential funding streams for new productive woodlands; and,
- Identify potential projects and help them through the application process.

The next steps for the working group are to:

- Produce documents to outline the opportunity that new productive woodland planting presents for investors, landowners and stakeholders;
- Produce some new woodland opportunity maps and continue to promote opportunities for new multipurpose woodlands;
- Actively market the opportunity through direct mailing, e-mails, news articles and a promotional event; and,
- Continue to work with the Forestry Commission on the Durham EIA project to develop a more streamlined process whilst maintaining the necessary controls.

A Parliamentary reception has been arranged for 02 February 2016 at 3pm to launch the Productive Woodland Investment Prospectus to the APPG on Forestry, Northern MP's and hopefully the Minister.

Barriers to new planting

Confor has been participating in a pilot project, in Durham, that:

- Identifies appropriate areas for woodland creation where there would be a presumption in favour of planting;
- Clarifies where a full Environmental Statement is unlikely to be required; and,
- Considers whether there are other aspects of the current regulatory framework and consultation processes that are not needed to ensure environmental and social benefits, but do deter landowners from creating new woodland.

The pilot has helped identify a number of wider issues associated with new woodland creation schemes and has scoped products to help resolve them.

Northumberland National Park

Confor has been working hard to try and understand some of the issues Northumberland National Park have with commercial woodlands. On 02 October we gave a presentation to the National Parks and Protected Landscapes woodlands officers bi-annual meeting about what modern productive woodland planting involves.

Confor teams with ICF to discuss improving resilience in forests

Dalby Forest was the venue for October's joint Confor/ICF Northern England Meeting, hosted by Jon Bates (FC England). The day began with presentations from Victoria Stokes (Forest Research) on Natural Regeneration, John Weir (FC England) on Resistance and Resilience, and Confor's Andrew Heald updating on work to improve certification, particularly the ongoing UKWAS review. After lunch there were visits to a number of forest sites, where new approaches to species choice and silviculture were being tried, to discuss FC England's restocking choices, which was summarised as, "anything but Sitka" according to one of the delegates. Oliver Combe, Confor's north region Chair, questioned, "I am still struggling to understand why government is so keen to encourage us to diversify the conifer resource but shows no interest in diversifying the oak and ash resource?"

South east of England LEP Progress

Confor has spent three years working with the SE LEPs on behalf of members to build understanding of the forestry sector and what a great investment it is for local jobs and growth. Today members are reaping the rewards of this work by Confor with over £1million of unprecedented investment into their businesses.

>>



NEW MEMBERS

Jonathan Burke, Wales
 Andrew Gardiner, Cumbria
 James Hamilton, London
 Howards Jones, Denbighshire
 Laura Joule, Gloucestershire
 Rodney Pimm, Inverness-shire
 Gary Rooke, Wiltshire
 Dunnewoods, Cumbria
 Scotrees Ltd, Aberdeenshire
 Valley Forestry Ltd, Gloucestershire
 Gary Waters, Kent
 Bryan Elliott, Devon
 Skairfield Ltd, Dumfries

KEY EVENTS in 2016

Confor March conference

Forestry and timber: Scotland's hidden success story March 2016 (date tbc)
 National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh

ICF National Conference 2016

The Timber Supply Chain – Dynamics and Opportunities 27 April 2016, Newcastle

APF 2016

15 September 2016, Ragley Estate
www.apfexhibition.co.uk

Grown in Britain week 2016

10-16 October 2016, various locations
www.growninbritain.org

More info on www.confor.org (news and events)

SCOTLAND

Jamie Farquhar, Confor national manager for Scotland
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Regional meetings

In October, another successful round of meetings for the forestry & timber industry have been held in Scotland, with topics on regional forestry and woodland strategies and the impact of global trade on future forestry prospects, the opportunities for more woodland creation under the changed CAP regime, and on whether we can afford to dilute the country's spruce resource with alternative conifers to produce resilient forests in the future.

Around 150 delegates also heard industry updates on certification and new & emerging market opportunities. The meetings are supported by Forestry Commission Scotland and Scottish Enterprise, and the presentations can be seen at www.forestryscotland.com

Initiative with Kew Gardens to protect Scotland's trees takes root

With a host of new pests and diseases attacking the UK's native treescape, a new consortium of Scottish organisations, working with Kew's Millennium Seed Bank, are tackling the threat, as part of the UK National Tree Seed Project.

The project has been rolled out across England with great success, and will now be extended throughout Scotland and Wales.

Fifteen organisations across Scotland are partnering with Kew for the project and species targeted in the Project include: Scots pine, Common ash, Common alder and Silver birch.

Forestry Grant Scheme

With all options other than agroforestry now open, some 170+ applications have been submitted, 141 applications for woodland management options and 33 applications for woodland creation. The first clearing round was held in October and every FGS application that made it to that round has been approved.

New Woodland Creation

As time runs out in the 2015 claim year, it looks as though we will only reach about 5000ha of



new woodland creation this year. However, there are an encouraging number of schemes in the pipeline that Conservators are aware of, totalling over 6000ha, including 4200ha of conifer options. This is one of the main subjects we will be addressing when we meet the Minister on 03 December.

Hunt on for Scotland's finest woods

Businesses in the forestry sector are being urged to find out if their woodland is one of the best by entering the 2016 Scotland's Finest Woods Awards. Now open for applications, the Awards are an annual recognition and celebration of those who use, promote, own or manage Scotland's woods and forests to deliver economic, environmental and social benefits.

www.sfw.co.uk/

Environmental Co-operation Action Fund

ECAF is a new £10 million scheme within the 2014-20 Scottish RDP. The first application round opened on 06 October 2015 and will close on 15 January 2016. The purpose of the Environmental Co-operation Action Fund is to encourage and support landscape-scale environmental projects involving co-operating groups of farmers, foresters and/or other land managers. The workshop events are:

- 07 December, 13:30-16:00, Glasgow
- 08 December, 13:30-16:00, Edinburgh
- 14 December, 13:30-16:00, Inverness

The events are free and more information on location and registry can be found here www.ruralnetwork.scot/environmental-co-operation-action-fund-workshop-events-1

Forest roads and private ways

A review will get under way in the New Year on the requirement to obtain prior approval from local planning authorities for new or upgrading forest roads, via the Prior Notification procedure. Scottish Government has engaged consultants to undertake the review, and they will be seeking evidence of people's experience of the process. Members who have had to go through the new procedures are requested to let the National manager know if they are prepared to take part in the review. The Minister gave us an assurance that if there was sufficient evidence that forest roads are not a problem and do not thus warrant the time and cost of obtaining prior approval, then the situation would be re-visited.

Dates for the diary

More info on www.confor.org (news and events)

The next round of regional forestry & timber industry evening meetings are planned for the following dates in 2016:

South Scotland: 02 March Lockerbie

North-east Scotland: 09 March Deeside (tbc)

Mid Scotland: 16 March Stirling

Agendas for the meetings will be decided by the relevant steering groups in the second week of January.

WALES

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Glastir Woodland Restoration scheme

Deputy Minister for Farming and Food, Rebecca Evans has announced that a second Expression of Interest (EoI) window in the Glastir Woodland Restoration scheme will open on the 19th of October and close at midnight on the 13th of November 2015. This Expression of Interest window is targeting areas where re-planting can be completed by 31 March 2016. Glastir Woodland Restoration supports re-planting of woodland where ramorum disease of larch has become a threat.

Glastir Woodland Restoration, which first opened in the summer has already received 40 applications during the round of expressions of interest, it is a vital part of the management of the P Ramorum disease in Wales and is welcomed by Confor and the forestry sector in Wales.

Farming Connect unveils its plans for lifelong learning and development

Farming Connect's plans for the second phase of delivery of 'Invest in skills and mentoring' were unveiled by the Deputy Minister for Farming and Food, Rebecca Evans, at the Royal Welsh Winter Fair at Llanellwedd.

This new element of the Farming Connect service has been designed to put continual professional development (CPD) on the agenda for all businesses in the farming and forestry sectors.

It includes a new CPD framework and e-learning packages; online personal development plans and a new mentoring scheme.

At the heart of the new Farming Connect programme of knowledge transfer and innovation, which was launched by the Deputy Minister in October this year, is the provision of Welsh Government support for transformational change within the farm and forestry sectors in Wales.

The Deputy Minister's vision, shared by the industry, is for Welsh Government to provide a support package of services which will enable farm and forestry businesses in Wales to modernise, be more resilient to external economic factors and to become more profitable.

Rollout of the different elements of the new Farming Connect service is already under way and many services within the new Develop your Business category are now available or due to come on stream shortly. They include support available on a group or one-to-one basis through a new subsidised Advisory Service, one-to-one surgeries and clinics on a range of topics.

Businesses will also be encouraged to consider participating in a new Management >>

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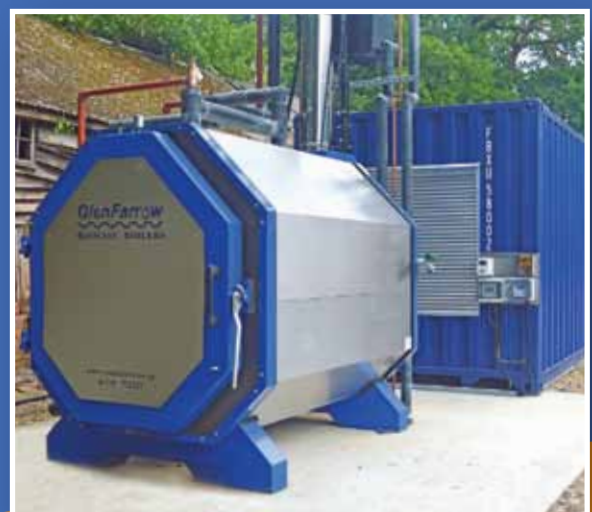
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COUNTRY NEWS

Exchange service that will encourage business people to learn from best practice by either visiting other successful businesses in the EU or hosting a visiting delegate.

Confor welcomes the opportunities presented by Farming Connect's programme and encourages everyone in the forestry sector to get involved.

For more information visit www.gov.wales/farmingconnect or call the Farming Connect Service Centre on 08456 000 813.

Confor is represented on Farming Connect and we will be circulating details of the help they can provide to our sector.

New NRW board members and chairman

Following the departure of Prof Peter Matthews, PhD, FRSC, FCIWEM, FIWO, Diane McCrea has been appointed as the new Chair of NRW. Diane has held a variety of non-executive positions in the public, private and voluntary sectors. Recently she completed her term of office with the Consumer Council for Water, as Chair of the Wales Committee and Vice Chair of the Board for England and Wales.

Deputy Chair Dr Madeleine Havard is an



The Farming Connect programme was launched at the Welsh Dairy Show

environmental scientist. She studied Zoology and Environmental Studies before earning a PhD in Estuarine Biology and Chemistry. She has worked in both public and voluntary sector environmental organisations (Nature Conservancy Council, WWF-UK, The Wildlife

Trust of South & West Wales) and as a Lecturer in Natural / Environmental Science at Cardiff University.

The New NRW Board Members are: Chris Blake, Elizabeth Haywood, Howard Davies, Karen Balmer and Zoë Henderson.

NORTHERN IRELAND

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Triumph for Northern Ireland at Irish Forestry Awards

Northern Ireland's foresters came out on top at the Irish Forestry Awards in Castletown House, Co. Kildare yesterday (November 4 2015). Shanes Castle Estate from Co. Antrim and Learmount Forest in Co. Derry received two of the major honours at the Awards in recognition of excellence in forest management.

The Irish Forestry Awards are jointly awarded by the RDS and the Forest Service of the Republic of Ireland. Andrew Doyle TD, Chair of the Oireachtas Committee for Agriculture and RDS President Matt Dempsey were on hand to award the prizes.

Speaking at Castletown House, RDS President Matt Dempsey said: "These awards provide an excellent opportunity to showcase all that is good about Irish Forestry. Good farmers make good foresters and forestry is an important element of Ireland's farming sector."

Winning a prize of €2000 and the RDS Silver Medal in the Multipurpose Forestry Category, Shanes Castle Estate is an excellent example of the economic and environmental benefits that good forestry brings. Owned by Lord O'Neill, and managed by leading UK and Irish forest management company Scottish Woodlands Ltd, the 315ha woodland has a history of continuous planting over the last three centuries providing a sustainable source of timber production, income and employment

opportunities in the local area.

Making it a Northern Ireland double this year, Learmount Forest won the 2015 Irish Forestry Community Woodland Award. Some 30 km from Derry City, Learmount covers 118ha of woodland in the foothills of the Sperrin Mountains. Bought by the Forest Service of Northern Ireland at the end of the Second World War, it has over 15 different tree species planted, with some of which are over 100 years old.

The Learmount Community Development Group is very active in the area and use the forest extensively for various activities and events throughout the year.

Narrowly missing out on making it a hat trick of wins for Northern Ireland Baronscourt Estate near Omagh, Co. Tyrone, was runner up in the Production Forestry Category. Winning a prize of €1000 and the RDS Certificate of Merit, Baronscourt Estate, extends to over 58 hectares

and comprises a mix of both broadleaf and conifer species which are managed in a successful and sustainable way.

Finally, Seaforde Estate in Co. Down which is owned by the Forde family and also managed by Scottish Woodlands Ltd were awarded the RDS Ulster Provincial Certificate of Merit in Recognition of Woodland Excellence.

Local AGM

The Northern Ireland Confor AGM was very kindly hosted by Balcas at their sawmill in Enniskillen on Friday 20 November. A large group of members were very impressed with the modern facility, which employs over 200 people and processes over a million tonnes of timber per year – or as our host Andrew Kidney pointed out, that's about 140 miles of logs per week. Confor is very grateful to Balcas for hosting the event.



L-R: Andrew Doyle, Chair of Oireachtas Committee for Agriculture, Hon. Shane O'Neill, Shane Castle Estate, Catriona Goughy, Learmount Community Association & Matt Dempsey, President RDS.

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WOODFUEL

Sustainability in the wood fuel supply chain

There is growing concern in the industry that the requirement for forest management plans to demonstrate sustainability is causing problems in the wood fuel supply chain. Confor has continually pushed that a Felling Licence demonstrates UKFS compliance; but we have now been hearing calls from several members that they are being asked by some end customers to provide management plan documentation. These concerns have already been forwarded to DEFRA and DECC, with a meeting planned for the next few weeks. With sawmills sourcing material from multiple sites at any time, it is wholly unworkable for them to hold forest management plans, which they could then forward to the chip customers.

Woodsure 'protects customers and air quality'

The Woodsure quality assurance scheme has launched to the public on 15 October and will protect millions of home-owners, schools and businesses across the UK from burning poor quality woodfuel used for heating.

Figures released by Woodsure indicate that a quarter of all woodfuel used by UK consumers fails to meet quality standards. It estimates that hundreds of thousands of tonnes of poor quality biomass woodfuel is being used by UK homeowners and businesses every year, damaging air quality.

With more private households, businesses and municipal authorities using woodfuel for heating, the scheme couldn't have come at a better time, with demand for woodfuel growing by some 5000 tonnes a week at the beginning of the year.

A national kite mark for woodfuel has never existed before in the UK. The launch closes what Woodsure believes is the missing link in woodfuel's sustainability credentials.

The scheme and its launch has been widely welcomed by Government and industry. Over 200 woodfuel suppliers are currently Woodsure certified and the list is growing.

BOOKS

Living with a wood

Willie McGhee reviews *Thirty Years in Wilderness Wood*



Chris Yarrow's *Thirty Years in Wilderness Wood* charts a journey in sustainable living that Chris and his wife Anne embark on to avoid the humdrum of middle age. And how they bought, lived in, managed and made a living from a 63 acre wood in Sussex.

The story is engaging and the narrative peppered with anecdotes and nuggets of small wood management wisdom. The writing of the book was shared between a husband and wife team who carved out a woodland existence on their terms, following their very own brand of environmentally sensitive, green principles.

It is a story of highs and lows. Of successful and less than successful ventures and we are led from the search for the woodland, which they bought for £28,000 in 1980, through the vicissitudes of planning applications and building a house, to a plethora of different woodland and amenity ventures that Chris and Anne pursue in their quest for self sustainability. Establishing Wilderness Woods as a tourist destination and visitor centre with adventure playground, shelters and tea shop, an ill-fated attempt at Christmas tree production, production and sale of garden items including bean poles and pea sticks, marketing of foliage and moss, and firewood and timber production. The list of ventures is long.

For the forester there is much to mull over and ponder. Chris is an outspoken chartered forester who has strong opinions regarding the decline in lowland forest management and lowland woods. He charts the historical demise of such woods with a passion and counterpoints the paucity of silvicultural skills required to manage mainstream industrial forests with the silvicultural skills required to manage a lowland wood using Continuous Cover Forestry. He readily acknowledges his own deficiencies when faced with

managing Wilderness Woods and counterpoints British forestry practice with French and German forestry, where there is no shortage of silvicultural nous. He does not confine his forthrightness to mainstream forestry and expresses his views on conservation fashion, taking a swipe at those obsessed with native woodland purity for failing to recognize the value of exotic conifers in small woodlands.

Chris and Anne employ a variety of silvicultural techniques to transform essentially neglected woodland composed of chestnut coppice and young broadleaved and conifer plantations into a vibrant productive woodland with high recreational and biodiversity value. Chapter 11; How we managed our wood: coppicing, and Chapter 12; Growing Big Trees, are particularly interesting, with a blow by blow account of the challenges and drawbacks of managing chestnut coppice, and the involved process of establishing CCF (Continuous Cover Forestry).

The author is nothing if not self-critical, he remarks on mistakes made, or ill-conceived or not well thought out choices, such as the use of larch on wrong soils with insufficient light. He lays out the do's and don'ts of woodland management based on his experiences and gives a comprehensive summary of money matters. This is a valuable book to read for anyone interested in owning or managing a small woodland and Chris and Anne Yarrow bring a refreshing insight and honesty to the topic.

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Living in harmony

The relationship between forest managers and contractors doesn't always run smoothly, says **Norman Gardner-Hall**

My first contact with forestry contractors was as a cutter in the 1970's, at FC Craik. While we were toiling to clear the remnants of the 1968 windblow, they, with their shiny new Subaru pickup and chainsaws that had no contact points, were enjoying some prime late thinning. Consequently we regarded them with envy and disdain. Several years later, at Grizedale, I was responsible for a new Bruunett forwarder in first and second thinnings, and two County-based skidders on clearfell, with three squads of FC cutters to keep them fed. To ensure continuity of supply, we also took on two contractors. Contractors were very much the exception rather than the rule.

How times have changed! In both state and private forestry, direct labour levels have shrunk to become almost invisible. Driven largely by economics, the vast majority of forest operations, especially at the establishment phase, are now carried out by contractors. Given that many once-thriving forestry communities have now become dormitory or second-home villages, this depletion is irreversible. Thus, the relationship between the forest manager and the contractor – a very different scenario than between employer and employee – is fundamental to an efficient and harmonious forest industry. Essentially, this comes down to a mutual recognition of the challenges and pressures faced by both sides, although my perspective here is that of the contractor. Given that a good manager will seek to retain good contractors (and that, likewise, contractors will be happy to continue working for good managers) and that prices and quality are not

an issue, what other aspects of the relationship can be improved upon?

Being self-employed can be a precarious business in any industry, even more so in forestry contracting. As well as the normal risks, there is the ever-present threat of injury. In addition, adverse weather can shut down operations completely. So it is essential that, when work is possible, it can commence and continue unhindered. Few things are more frustrating to a contractor than to be ready yet unable to work because of avoidable delays. If a start-date has been agreed upon, everything must be in place on that day – materials, paperwork, access. If it becomes clear, for whatever reason, that there will be a delay, the contractor should be informed as soon as possible. Similarly, the contractor should keep the manager informed of progress, and give due warning if more materials will be required.

Assuming the work is underway, the biggest potential issue facing any contractor is getting paid. Establishment operations are seasonal, and many contractors will already have been

unemployed for a period. The work is hard, is expected to be done whatever the weather, and is not particularly well-paid. So it is reasonable to expect timely payments. The damage to morale and retention resulting from slow payments should not be underestimated.

Organisation and payments are basically administrative issues, and thus should be relatively straightforward to resolve. The operational (and in the long term, personal) relationship between manager and contractor is one that evolves and inevitably has its ups and downs; but it is the basis of a successful working environment for individuals and the industry as a whole. Effective communication, or the lack of it, is at its heart.

One must return here to the real or perceived insecurity of the contractor's situation. It can also be a solitary occupation, where a lack of information can easily be translated into 'No news is bad news.' In practice, any news – good or bad – is preferable to simply not knowing what the future holds. So whether work is about to run out or there is an abundance, the contractor needs to know so he can either seek alternatives or relax. Bad news is not easy to deliver, but that delivery should not be postponed.

Quality control is an area in which the relationship between contractor and manager can become most strained. Jobs do go wrong, through bad practice, poor supervision or even simple error. Whatever the cause, if it is dealt with promptly, calmly and fairly, it can be rectified and consigned to history.

Criticism and praise are two sides of the same coin, and should be dispensed sparingly. Over-effusive praise sounds hollow. At the same time, a job well-done deserves recognition, to both the contractor and the squad.

Some forest managers may have been contractors themselves and, in my experience, will have benefitted in terms of how they approach the manager/contractor relationship. Nevertheless, there can be few situations where a little improvement is not possible, to the benefit of both parties. That is not to say that contractors have nothing to learn; that may be the focus of a future article.



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Glyphosate - how rainfast is it?

Glyphosate manufacturers suggest that the herbicide is rainfast in 6 - 24 hours (Roundup ProBio and Clinic Ace), and during 2015, trials were conducted on these two products to evaluate this statement.

Earlier Forestry Commission trials using 8l/ha glyphosate on rhododendron in 2010 showed that 6mm of rain falling one hour after application of glyphosate seriously affected the effectiveness of the products, but the addition of an adjuvant such as Mixture B NF to Clinic Ace or Roundup ProBio made the herbicide rainfast after one hour.

However, most growers avoid spraying when heavy rain is likely, but can be caught out by a light shower, so two further trials were carried out in 2015 in Herefordshire on grass and broad-leaved weeds to find out results after a shower in "catchy weather" represented by a high volume spray of 1600l/ha. One of these trials was sponsored by a consortium of organisations including Confor, and the other by the manufacturer of Clinic Act, Nufarm UK.

The first trial in a lowland grass field showed that 2.5l/ha glyphosate was adversely affected by a shower 45 minutes after application, but the addition of the adjuvants Validate or Phase II largely mitigated the rain's effect. Rain after 1.5 hours did not, however, reduce control of the grass.

The second trial showed that more mature grasses could be controlled when a shower fell after only 10 minutes - but on a different grass species. Here too, grass control was generally improved by the adding an adjuvant.

Buttercup, clover, and other broadleaved perennial weeds such as creeping thistle were less well controlled and there was little difference in control on either trial between Clinic Ace and Roundup ProBio.

Glyphosate and operator safety

Glyphosate has once again been receiving an adverse press following the classification by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as a Group 2A Probable Carcinogen. This puts it in the same WHO category as hairdressing, excessive sunlight and high temperature frying, so potentially worse than Group 2B Possible Carcinogens such as coffee drinking, bracken spores and petrol engine exhaust, but not classified as a Group 1 Proven Carcinogen which includes alcoholic drinks, tobacco smoking, diesel engine exhaust and the birth pill.

So how concerned should we be over this classification? It needs to be understood that the classification relates to hazard and not risk - and the motor car provides a useful conduit to highlight the difference between these two factors.

If the motor car was classified a hazard by the WHO, it would be difficult not to place it in Group 1 as a proven hazard. But we are all pretty comfortable with its use because we mitigate the risk of the hazard becoming a reality. We do this by rules & regulations such as the Highway Code, and by design - good brakes and handling, and



Trial 1 on a predominately Ryegrass meadow



Trial 2. 14 days after spraying in a young Spruce plantation

through protection such as airbags.

This is not different to risks and hazards with pesticides such as glyphosate.

So even if the glyphosate molecule was regarded as cancer forming (and no regulatory authority does), the risk is mitigated by conditions of use (rules & regulations), formulation (design), and protection (gloves, coveralls and boots) which brings any potential risk to an acceptably low level.

However, that aside, it is difficult not to be critical of the WHO in their handling of the data they have used, as it has been shown to be highly selective, using (and making errors in interpreting) old, superseded and discredited data, ignoring the vast worldwide dataset showing little or no cancer evidence.

Indeed, the European Food Standards Agency, who advise EU policy makers on all aspects of food safety, including pesticides, have ruled, following an exhaustive review published 12th November 2015 that "it is unlikely that this substance is carcinogenic".

Leading expert in the field, Sir Colin Berry, Emeritus Professor of Pathology at Queen Mary University of London, responded to the WHO report by commenting:

"There are over 60 genotoxicity studies on glyphosate with none showing results that should cause alarm relating to any likely human exposure. For human epidemiological studies there are seven cohort and 14 case control studies, none of which support carcinogenicity" Which should provide us with sufficient reassurance.

Asulox and Bracken

For the last few years, the use of Asulox for bracken control has been authorised by an Emergency Approval, and the message emerging from the Bracken Control Group in September was that this approval has a good chance of being renewed in 2016 with product available from mid-May. Applications by tractor or helicopter will hopefully resume from 01 July 2016.

However, abuse of the emergency system by some European countries means that tighter controls are being imposed - which the UK is confident of complying with, but we are warned not to be complacent. UPL, the licence holders, have already submitted a submission for a new European approval (it is approved worldwide outside of the EU) and if all goes smoothly then full approval is possible for 2019 - and an outside chance of 2018 in the UK.

Knapsack use continues to be contentious due to lack of operator toxicity modelling and the new tighter CRD rulebook for authorising hand-held use. There will be no change in 2016, so effectively 3.3l/ha in 300l/ha sprayed three times - on the same day if possible. Mitigation systems are being developed to try and find means of authorising hand-held use for 2017 - but don't hold your breath!

An alternative product which is regularly used in Christmas trees is also looking possible, with field trials giving very positive results. It is selective to conifers and some broad-leaves, and has good environmental and operator characteristics, so could be an option for hand held use if Asulox continues to remain effectively for tractor and aerial use.

Grandfathers - your time has come!

Yes, the deadline of 26 November has now passed. No-one can now use professional pesticides without an appropriate certificate, so contact your local agricultural college to arrange certification if you or your staff use pesticides without a PA1, PA6 or PA2 certificate. Members of a spraying gang may use sprayers - but they must be trained, competent & be in sight & voice contact of the gang foreman.

Colin Palmer. Rural Services - The Advisory Service for Weed & Pest Control in Forestry & Amenity.

MEMBER SERVICES PESTICIDES HELPLINE



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Research for small woodlands

I chair the Forestry Commission's Expert Committee on Forest Science which gives me a chance to see something of the latest research and development Forest Research is conducting. While it goes without saying that almost all research in trees, woods and forests benefit large and small alike, here I cherry-pick just a few of the current topics and themes of relevance to the needs of smaller woods. They are in no particular order or of merit: they interest me as a scientist and as a small woodland owner.

Oak processionary moth (OPM) – pictured – continues to be a worry in some London Parks and effectiveness of spraying and nest removal is being surveyed. We must hope it doesn't become widespread in the woodlands of south-east England where oak is such an important component. There is much else going on with Sudden Oak Death (SOD) and Acute Oak Decline (AOD) which requires all of us to be vigilant. And, of course, ash dieback is with us almost everywhere now and there are newer worries like the Sweet Chestnut gall wasp. But do check FR's website for updates.

The Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board is funding research on

long-term storage of acorns. Are there ways that this recalcitrant seed type can be persuaded to remain viable in store for longer than a couple of years at best when good mast years are often five years apart?

Woodland soils are being sampled to find new antibiotics from soil bacteria. FR is providing soils from the public forest estate to a team in the University of East Anglia.

Research into grey squirrels continues – but not a lot else on mammals by FR – and like everyone else the possibilities of pine marten re-introduction (by Vincent Wildlife Research) and their interaction with squirrel ecology is being watched with interest.

Emerging species research remains a high priority and is classic long-term research of the type which has so benefited British forestry in the past. With all the threats there are and the changes in climate taking place, having several alternatives up our sleeve is surely prudent.

Research – a perfect fit for private sector investment

If this list suggests plenty of work, it should, and it is but a tiny proportion of what FR are doing. However, there is a grimmer picture.



Eighteen years ago I left FR from the post of Chief Research Officer (S). Today's FC spend on research is a little over half what it was all those years ago. FR

staff have done wonders in winning outside work which has risen to several million pounds per year. We all understand the pressures causing these cuts in science and research budgets, but the amount Britain spends on our trees and forests is lamentable for a land use occupying 13% of the country and for an industry recently estimated by European Economics to be worth £270 billion to the economy in natural capital terms when all that trees provide is taken into account. There is a further 'scandal' – how little the private sector contributes. We all know the arguments - it is part of government's support for forestry, often sites are offered in kind, it has always been thus etc – but writing here in Confor's flagship magazine can we not reconsider? Surely a topic like research into emerging species is a perfect fit for private sector investment since it is investment, first and foremost, into the future of our industry. So what is holding us back?



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