

Establishing a Farm Forest: How do I get the work done?



The First Step - Get answers to some questions



For independent forestry advice and information contact your local Teagasc Forestry Adviser through your local Teagasc office or at www.teagasc.ie/forestry

Afforestation Grants and Premium Scheme

The Afforestation Grant and Premium Scheme is available from the Forestry Division, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM). Funding is available under a range of Grant and Premium Categories (GPCs) including:

- Afforestation (GPCs 1-8)
- Native Woodland Establishment (GPCs 9-10)
- Agro-forestry (GPC 11)
- Forestry for Fibre (GPC 12)

The grants available in these schemes generally cover most/all of the costs associated with planting and maintenance. The rate of grant and annual premium available under GPCs depends on land quality, species planted and area planted.

The first instalment is then paid after planting subject to adherence such as ground preparation, drainage, fencing and planting.

The second instalment (the remaining 25%) is paid four years after planting, once the trees have become fully established and are free-growing. This payment covers maintenance works (e.g. vegetation management and replacement of failures).

Preplanting applications are submitted to DAFM and technical approval may be issued following assessment. Establishment operations can begin only once subsequent financial approval has been obtained. The first instalment is then paid after planting subject to adherence to scheme conditions and various environmental guidelines. Preplanting applications must be prepared by a Registered Forester.

How do I get the planting done?

The option you choose should reflect your circumstances and the amount of time you can allocate to planning, organising and doing the work. It is important that your investment is managed to the highest standards to ensure you reap the rewards as the timber matures.



Take the opportunity to participate in forestry field evenings and training courses organised by Teagasc and DAFM.

Ensure that you have a robust written contract with your Registered Forester (see box) in place before any work begins. All contracts should be referred to a solicitor. DAFM sets the standards of the Afforestation Grant and Premium Scheme and approves grant and premium payments. Once you have decided to plant, you can choose how to get the job done from the list of options described overleaf.

Registered Foresters are professional foresters, working either as consultant foresters or employed by forestry companies. They are registered with DAFM and authorised to submit forestry grant scheme applications. All registered foresters carry professional indemnity insurance. A list of Registered Foresters is available from your local Teagasc Forestry Adviser, the Teagasc Forestry website www.teagasc.ie/forestry or from DAFM, Johnstown Castle, Co. Wexford. Lo-call 076 1064415 or 053 9163400.

No matter which option you choose, all paperwork at pre-planting, post-planting and at the second instalment stage must be prepared by a Registered Forester working on your behalf.

Option 1: Organise the establishment work yourself

This is the most hands-on option, so you must invest time in gaining a good knowledge of forest establishment and management techniques.

You are required to employ a Registered Forester to help prepare and to submit your application to DAFM. Only when written financial approval has been received can the afforestation work start.



Padraig Corcoran from Co Roscommon planted under Option 1

“I had time and confidence to do the job myself and I wanted to see the rewards of my work for myself and family. I had a good relationship with my forester and that was very important.”

All sub-contractors hired, such as machine operators for mounding and drainage must be fully tax compliant. When the work is completed, the same Registered Forester submits an application to the Forest Service for payment to you of the first instalment grant and the first forest premium payment. Proof of ownership and farming status are required at this stage. Your site may also be subject to a DAFM inspection after four years prior to payment of the second instalment grant. You, the applicant, must be prepared to fund all costs until the grant has been paid by DAFM.

Option 2: Hire a Registered Forester to organise some or all of the establishment work.

Employ a Registered Forester to submit your application to DAFM. Only when written financial approval has been received can the afforestation work start. The Registered Forester will co-ordinate some or all of the work, as they will have knowledge of subcontractors and machine operators and can source trees and other materials.



Michael Murphy from County Cork planted under Option 2

“I worked with a registered forester who organised much of the work but I was involved in the planting. I look forward to leaving a living, vibrant native woodland legacy for future generations of my family.”

Some of the work can be carried out by you, as agreed with your Registered Forester in the written contract. You, the landowner, must be prepared to fund all costs until the grant has been paid by DAFM, unless there is an agreement to mandate the grant to the Registered Forester. The works and the costs involved should be specified in a written contract.

Most Registered Foresters establish and maintain plantations under a 4-year contract and usually request that the grants are mandated to them.

You are responsible!

Prior to the payment of the second instalment grant at Year 4, you, as the forest owner, must be satisfied that the forest has been maintained in accordance with best forest practice and only if you are happy with your plantation should you sign the relevant form (Form 3).

No matter which option you choose, the Forest Service Inspector will assess a sample of sites at pre-approval stage, post planting stage and at year 4 stage, so do not assume that standards have been checked by a DAFM forestry Inspector.



Planting land is a major decision and you should be satisfied that the establishment option you choose is right for you.

Talk to your local Teagasc Forestry Adviser who will help you with free, independent and objective advice.

It is important to keep in mind that you, as the applicant, have ultimate responsibility to DAFM for your plantation.

Insurance against potential hazards such as fire and windthrow should be considered to protect your investment.

Remember – Questions to inform your planting decision:

- Is some of my land suitable for forestry?
- Are there environmental restrictions on my land? e.g. SAC, SPA, etc.
- Do any other restrictions limit my planting options?
- Have I decided what I want from a new forest?
- Which Grant and Premium Category (GPC) will suit my land best?
- Will planting optimise returns from my family farm into the future?
- What proportion of my land should I plant?
- How will planting interact with the following:
 - Basic Payment/ Greening Scheme
 - Areas of Natural Constraint (ANC) Scheme
 - Agri-Environmental Scheme(s)
 - Nitrates calculations
 - Stocking rate calculations
- Am I aware that the switch to forestry is a permanent land use change?

Applying for Planting Approval

As it takes a period of time for the application to be processed, make sure to apply for planting approval well in advance of the planting season, which normally runs between December and April.

- It may be helpful to seek references from existing forest owners when selecting a Registered Forester, one of which is required to co-apply with you for planting approval.
- Include any areas you are unsure of in the application, as you can plant as much or as little of the area that receives approval afterwards.

A properly established farm forest contributes to farm viability and sustainability. It benefits the environment, mitigates GHG emissions and can provide a source of renewable energy. In addition it represents an appreciating tax-efficient asset, a good pension scheme for you, and a valuable inheritance for future generations. It will also help support the local rural community and economy. However ongoing active management is critical for success.

For all your forestry advice and training needs

Contact your local Teagasc Forestry Development Officer:

Head of Forestry Development Department

Nuala Ni Fhlatharta

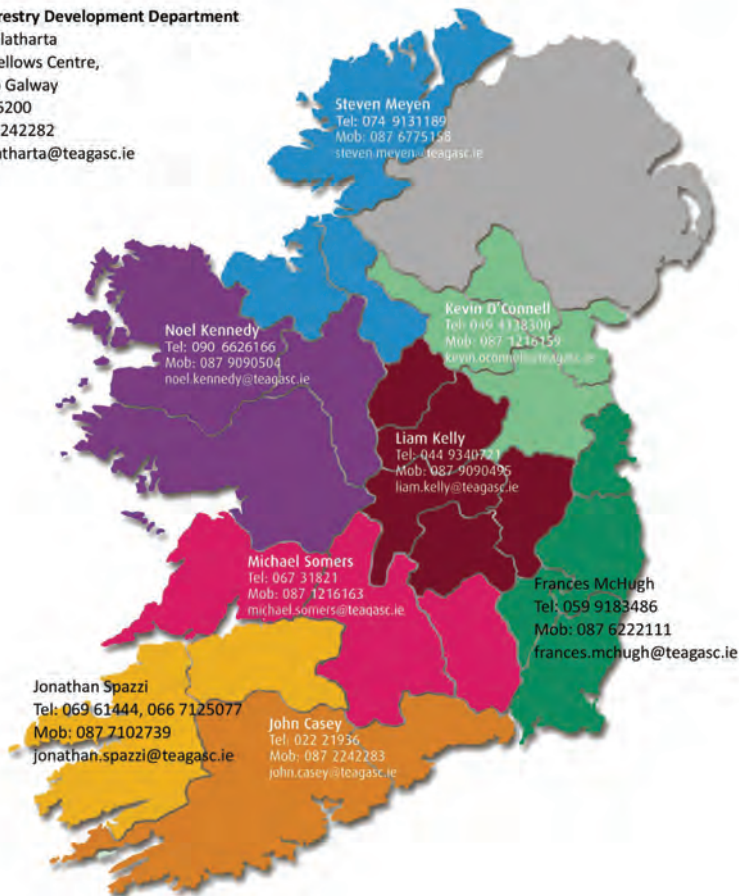
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How can Teagasc help you?

Operating nationwide, Teagasc Forestry Advisers provide independent services on every aspect of forestry to all landowners.

Services include:

- Advice on planting land and implications for your farm enterprise
- Advice on land suitability and environmental considerations
- One-to-one advice on the management of forests of all ages
- Forestry field evenings, on-site farm forestry demonstrations and training courses

For more information on Afforestation Grant and Premium Categories, please read this brochure in conjunction with **Teagasc Farm Forestry Series No.18** “Afforestation Grant and Premium Scheme 2014-2020 - A Guide to Grant and Premium Categories”

Keep in touch ...

Up-to-date and detailed information on:

- forestry grant schemes
- forestry staff contact details
- contact details for Registered Foresters
- and much more

Info available from: www.teagasc.ie/forestry

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**An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
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