

FARM FORESTRY

Forestry benefits for farm families



Generous funding available

Afforestation Grant and Premium Scheme

This Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) scheme supports the planting of new forests and includes 12 separate planting categories designed to accommodate a wide range of objectives.

Forest options that can be incorporated on the farm include commercial conifers, broadleaves, native woodland, agroforestry and 'forest for fibre'.

Support is also available for existing forest owners, including for broadleaf thinning and forest road grants.

A mix of appropriate categories can be considered on many farms, including:

- planting a 15% diverse conifer/broadleaf forest on marginal land can deliver an annual equivalent value of over €500/ha/year (indicative of agricultural gross margin);
- incorporating agroforestry, which combines trees and farming activity on the same land parcels; and,
- using native woodland combined with an unplanted buffer strip (biodiversity zone) along farm waterbodies to protect them from nutrients, silt or other threats.

A farm forest provides many benefits

Financial:

- making marginal and fragmented areas work for you;
- attracting grants, which generally cover all establishment and early maintenance costs;
- offering annual per hectare premiums up to €680 for 15 years in most cases;
- offering the potential to retain your Basic Payment on planted areas;
- diversifying farm income streams;
- building a valuable pension fund for the family; and,
- providing an on-farm timber and fuel supply.

Environmental/social:

Well-planned forests can:

- remove and store up to 10 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per hectare annually;
- protect and enhance water quality;
- create habitats to improve farm biodiversity; and,
- improve the farm landscape, and create a resource for family recreation.

Teagasc supports

- Comprehensive advice is available to landowners considering farm forestry;
- This service is free, independent and objective; and,
- Teagasc also holds local/national events to support farm forest decision making, so contact your local Teagasc advisor to explore the range of benefits for you and your family today to:
 - explore how forestry can fit into the current farming mix; and,
 - explore how it fits in with other farm schemes



CASE STUDY

Good decision benefits three generations



Michael before (inset) and after his harvest.

MICHAEL OWENS' father decided to plant a farm forest in 1989. Michael recently reaped the rewards, which will be passed on to his own children.

Michael is a dairy farmer from Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny, who harvested his 2.5 hectare forest in the autumn of 2018, after two thinnings.

His late father had been inspired to plant 29 years earlier. According to Michael: "We are very happy with the way the harvesting worked out, the whole job was done in three days. It has produced over 750 tonnes and the price we will receive is about €55 per tonne, perhaps even a bit more. We are lucky that timber prices are strong at the moment. It will cost 10% of the money we receive to replant and put it back; the remainder, as you all know, is income tax free anyway".

Michael was impressed with the timber and financial return from his forest, explaining that: "It yielded pretty good, it was fairly straight and the product breakdown is 45% saw log, 37% pallet wood and the remainder is going to pulp".

Returns from harvest

750 tonnes at €55/t	41,250
Minus replanting costs (10%)	4,125
Total return*	37,125
Return per hectare	14,850

* Note: Subject to relevant USC and PRSI.

Michael describes how harvesting went:

"Number one, the weather was super, the ground was bone-dry and there wasn't a mark on the ground.

But the brash was piled up in rows along the site and the forwarder (collecting the timber) travelled along these. Basically, it doesn't touch the ground and didn't impact with the soil in any way".

The existing broadleaf trees in the forest were also retained and Michael has since replanted a further 10% broadleaves through the site for environmental and aesthetic enhancement.

Michael will make good use of his farm forest returns. His family is his top priority and he is keen to invest in their future.

Facts and figures

- Since 1980, almost 23,000 unique private forest owners, the majority farmers, have received grant aid to establish forests.
- Nearly half of all individual owners who planted since 1980 have gone on to plant further again.
- All new forests must include at least 15% broadleaf species, along with up to 15% retained areas for biodiversity enhancement.
- Each year, our forests absorb the annual CO₂ emissions from almost 80% of the cars on our roads.
- Forestry employs 12,000 people, the majority in rural areas and each year contributes up to €2.3 billion to our economy.

Get informed

- Visit the forestry section of the Teagasc website for detailed information on forestry grants and premiums.
- Check out our publication 'A Forest to Suit Every Farm', which describes the experiences of farmers around the country who have chosen forestry options.



- Why not also sign up to our free e-newsletter, to keep right up to date on all forestry issues?

Further information

For further information please contact your local Teagasc forestry advisor. Visit www.teagasc.ie/forestrystaff for all contact details.

The following resources are also helpful:

- www.teagasc.ie/forestry
- www.teagasc.ie/forestrynews
- www.teagasc.ie/crops/forestry/grants
- www.agriculture.gov.ie/forests-service

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