# Forestry Road Map 2030

Teagasc
AGRICULTURE AND FOOD DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

## Forestry sector profile

The forestry sector in Ireland continues to grow and represents an increasingly important resource for rural economies. The national forest area extends to over 815,000 hectares, representing 11.8 percent of the total land area (excluding inland waterbodies). The land under forestry is almost evenly distributed between public and private ownership.

Ireland's Forest Strategy (2023 -2030) sets out the need to urgently increase forestry on both public and private land to deliver benefits for climate, biodiversity, water quality, wood production, economic development and quality of life. The current Forestry Programme (2023-2027) provides financial support for the creation of a range of smaller woodlands and larger forests to suit landowners objectives. Planting rates have been low in recent years but did increase in 2025 (2,527 ha) which is more than 50% higher than 2024 levels.

The sector has seen some significant challenges in recent years including major storm events and ash dieback disease. This has led to an increased focus on planning for harvesting and forest reconstitution. Enhanced forest planting rates and sustainable management of existing forests are needed to strengthen the carbon sink capacity of the forest resource post 2030. Support for private forest certification is also critical to meeting future market and consumer demands.

## Forestry sector statistics

**82%**
farmer share of private forestry
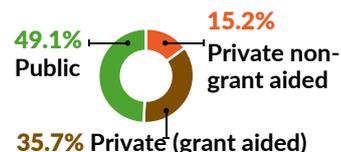
Species mix (2023)
**Conifer: 69%**
**Broadleaf: 31%**

### Land area (2024)

Of total land area, forests account for **11.8%**

### Forestry ownership

**49.1%** Public
**15.2%** Private non-grant aided
**35.7%** Private (grant aided)

| Exports | Outputs | Census |
|---|---|---|
| **Forestry and Wood Manufacture Gross Value Added at factor prices (€/millions)** | **New forest** (ha) | **Wood removals from public forests** ('000s m$^3$) |

| Exports | | Outputs | | Census | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2022 | 685 | 2022 | 2,273 | 2022 | 2,375 |
| 2023 | 718 | 2023 | 1,651 | 2023 | 2,447 |
| 2024 | 699 | 2024 | 1,573 | 2024 | 2,401 |
| | | 2025 | 2,527 | | |

**Total forest** (ha*)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2023 | 810,499 |
| 2024 | 812,072 |
| 2025 | 814,599 |

**Wood removals from private forests** ('000s m$^3$)

| | |
|---|---|
| 2022 | 1,811 |
| 2023 | 1,822 |
| 2024 | 1,995 |

*stats provided by CSO, DAFM, Eurostat, 2025

# Current forestry metrics and future targets

| | Sectoral performance indicators | 2023 | 2030 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Forest Access** | Private forest road construction (total km) | 78 | 90 |
| **Forest Certification** | Certified timber volume estimate ('000 m3) in a "business as usual" scenario | 3,047 | 3,400 |
| | Estimated additional certified timber volume ('000 m3) level to meet 70% threshold requirement by processing sector (for that year) | 555 | 1,600 |
| **Timber mobilisation** | Wood removals from private forests ('000 m3) | 1,811 | 3,300 |
| | Wood purchases by industry from private forests ('000 m3) | 1,010 | 2,200* |
| **Wood fibre Demand (RoI)** | Sawmill processing sector ('000 m3) | 2,500 | 3,980 |
| | Wood-based panel manufacturing sector ('000 m3) | 1,880 | 1,900 |

| | Performance Indicator for Improved Management | Limited Management | Improved Management |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Increased returns (Annualised Equivalent Value, AEV € / ha / yr) from improved management** | Mainly spruce forests –progression from limited to enhanced management (YC 20) | 630 | 666 |
| | Mainly spruce forests –progression from limited to enhanced management (YC 24) | 668 | 710 |
| | Mainly Sycamore forests –progression from limited to enhanced management (YC 10) | up to 65% increased returns (including AEV) | |

*based on an assumed roll out of a national forest certification initiative

# Forestry sector challenges and responses supported by Teagasc

## Social

### Balanced rural development
Well planned and managed farm forestry remains vital to vibrant rural economies. Teagasc will promote a range of forest types that meet forest owner objectives, from an economic, environmental and social perspective. A balanced approach will include an appropriate mix of commercially orientated and more environmentally focused forestry.

### Technology
Commercial growers will use increased automation and precision technologies to reduce the reliance on labour, enhance safety and improve productivity and sustainability. Teagasc supports appropriate digitalisation and automation of the industry – particularly in the areas of precision equipment and crop data for management.

### People
With both afforestation and production levels to continue to grow, the forestry sector will require additional skilled people across the sector. Teagasc will continue to facilitate the upskilling of forest owners and other stakeholders through dedicated face-to-face and online training modules as well as Knowledge Transfer Groups and other collaborative training initiatives.

### Health & safety
As a sector dependant on full time and part time labour using a lot of machinery there is a strong focus on health and safety. Teagasc supports improved health and safety in forestry through the provision of advice, education and support for adoption of automation systems that improve working conditions.

### Enterprise integration
Forestry, as part of a farming mix can be beneficial to all from an economic, environmental and social perspective. Teagasc is promoting appropriate integration through whole farm planning and engagement with other farming initiatives e.g. ASSAP, Signpost, Succession planning events and other farming schemes.

### Forests for Health
Forestry can promote health and wellness, including stress reduction, community engagement, cognitive restoration, and a renewed sense of purpose. Teagasc will support personal and societal goals for sustainability, physical and mental well-being, through knowledge sharing and public engagement at forest walks, community related events, safety promotion, etc.

# Forestry sector challenges and responses supported by Teagasc cont...

**Environment**

**Water quality** Minimising sediment and nutrient losses to waterways is crucial to improving water quality. Teagasc will promote best practices in forest establishment, including the potential for synergistic forest types to support water quality. It will also promote and demonstrate best practice through the Better Farming for Water: 8 - Actions for Change campaign and other collaborative initiatives.

**Carbon efficient farming** Forests and forest products play an important role in mitigating climate change by sequestering and storing atmospheric carbon. Teagasc research is investigating how climate change and land management impact carbon cycling and is building knowledge of carbon sequestration and GHG emissions in terms of afforestation, forest management and climate change. Teagasc advisory will share existing and emerging knowledge on forest carbon and developing opportunities within carbon farming through direct stakeholder engagement and through the development of supporting technologies such as the Forest Carbon Tool.

**Biodiversity**
Well planned and managed forests facilitate increased biodiversity value. Teagasc promotes forest planning and management to support forests that can provide multiple benefits, including high levels of biodiversity. Through research, Teagasc is exploring how timber production, ecosystem services and biodiversity can be optimised as part of a valuable forest resource.

**Soils**
Maintaining soils in good health with good physical, chemical and biological characteristics is essential for growers as is the efficient use of growing media. Teagasc programmes support careful nutrient management and promote practices to maintain and enhance soil health, including in forest scenarios.

**Integrated Pest Management**
Regulation and public opinion are increasing pressure on the safe use of pesticides. Teagasc will support producers in sustainable production techniques by making best use of integrated pest management (IPM) in crop production.

# Forestry sector challenges and responses supported by Teagasc cont...

**Economic**

### Timber Mobilisation Market Outlook

By 2030, the net realisable private timber volume is estimated at 3.5 million $m^3$, with a challenge to sustainably increase timber supply to meet owner and sector needs. Teagasc will promote sustainable timber mobilisation by supporting forest owners and groups and encouraging participation through innovative harvesting and marketing events.

### New Forestry Targets

Progressing towards 8,000 ha or more of new forest creation annually is a key goal in Irelands Forest Strategy 2023-2030 and Climate Action Plan 2024. Teagasc will support new forest creation with applied forest research on tree improvement, breeding and development of climate resilient genetic resources. Teagasc will also continue to provide decision support and whole farm planning to enhance the potential of new forest enterprises in land use planning.

### Optimum forest management

Forest owners seek to optimise the potential of their forest economically, environmentally and socially. Teagasc will support best practice in forest management research in both conifer and broadleaf silviculture as well as promote active forest management with owners in this regard.

### Forestry Certification

The lack of certification in the private forest sector is recognised as a potential future barrier to wood mobilisation and sales, with an estimated shortfall of up to 1.3 million $m^3$ in certified wood by 2030 under a "business as usual" scenario. Teagasc will raise awareness, share knowledge on certification benefits, and promote and support future initiatives to increase its availability and uptake.

## Contact

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The road map for forestry is available on **www.teagasc.ie**