



Derek McCabe receives the 2024 RDS Teagasc Farm Forestry Award from Pippa Hackett, Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture; Professor Frank O'Mara, Director of Teagasc, and John Dardis, RDS president.

A winning combination: farming and forestry in Cavan

Michael Somers,
Teagasc Forestry
Advisor

Derek McCabe and his family – winners of the 2024 RDS Teagasc Forestry Competition – combine a busy beef enterprise with 70 hectares of forest in Mountnugent, Co Cavan. Derek manages the forestry himself.

The McCabes run a mixed herd of pedigree Angus and Continental cattle and are on the road to organic status. Derek is also a keen breeder of Irish Draught Horses.

Derek has used his forestry management experiences and entrepreneurial skills to add value by developing a firewood and fencing business. “I believe that forestry has made our farm holding sustainable,” he says. “Each new generation in the family should be able to benefit from managing the forests.”

As well as his interest in his own forests, Derek is deeply involved in the Northeast Forestry Group. He believes in sending a really positive message to

the younger generation about forestry by working with schools to provide information and build knowledge.

On receiving the 2024 RDS Teagasc Farm Forestry Award, Derek commented: “We are delighted to win the Teagasc award. We’ve worked hard to develop our forest into something that will bring many kinds of rewards into the future and it’s great now to get this independent validation!”

Runners-up

James and Martina Ham from County Westmeath received the runners up award in the 2024 RDS Teagasc Farm Forestry Award.

They started planting 20 years ago and now have an area of forest equal to their farmed land area. The combination is now attracting their kids back to the home place. “We are anxious to push the compatibility of organic farming, forest production and biodiversity and are putting plans in place to make this happen,” says James.

Now in their seventh year the RDS Teagasc Farm Forestry Award recognises working farmers who are integrating forestry and farming for

environmental, social and economic benefits. It acknowledges the farmer’s role in actively managing the forest and promoting forest and tree planting to strengthen wider farming sustainability.

Do you have what it takes to be a RDS Teagasc Farm Forestry Award winner?

If you believe you are successfully integrating your farm and forest, why not put your name forward for the 2025 RDS Teagasc Farm Forestry Award?

The 2025 RDS Teagasc Farm Forestry Award is open for entries. The winner will receive €2,000 and an RDS Spring Awards Trophy. There is Runners-up prize of €1,000 and an RDS Certificate of Merit.

Follow this QR Code link for more information:

