

Teagasc Forestry Development Department response to the consultation document entitled *Draft Deer Management Policy Vision* by the Inter- agency Deer Policy Group, 2011.

The continuous deer population growth that has occurred in Ireland in the last 20 years has led to a situation where deer numbers may now be approximately 250,000. In specific geographic areas, deer numbers are negatively impacting on economical, environmental and social interests both within and outside forests.

- Teagasc agrees that a deer management policy would be best progressed within an external partnership arrangement comprising of representatives of the sectoral interests and the stakeholders concerned.
- Teagasc recognises the requirement to develop, promote and implement an integrated deer management system, taking into account current forest management, other land uses and related policies.
- An agreed national management deer policy would be the first step to developing said deer management system.
- The greatest benefits in terms of experience and backgrounds would accrue from an inter-agency approach, and involving both state-related agencies and NGOs.
- Any policy/ strategy needs to address all landowners' issues/ concerns, not just those from a forestry perspective. A public information campaign would be a very welcome start to developing awareness of the deer issue and the development of a deer management culture.
- Negative deer grazing impacts on Annex I habitats and Annex II species of conservation value, under the EU Habitats Directive, need to be investigated further. The cascade effect of deer grazing on biodiversity and tree species profile is of relevance both to commercial and environmental focused conifer & broadleaf crops.
- The potential biotic threat from deer-related diseases is an issue that concerns all landowners, both forestry & agricultural, and contingency plans would be very necessary as part of any deer management system.
- The involvement and co-operation of all stakeholders is critical for a widely accepted management policy.
- Deer management as an integral part of the overall forest management may have an impact as more private forest owners apply for forest certification. The responsibilities and obligations of landowners need to be clearly defined.

- The development of a deer processing and venison market in rural settings would be of economic benefit both locally & nationally, while providing a necessary degree of sustainability to any deer management system.
- Applied research should inform deer management policy development.

I would therefore request that I be involved in the proposed policy development partnership on behalf of the Forestry Development Department of Teagasc.

Regards,

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