



## Submission to the Draft Agriculture Appeals (Amendment) Bill 2020

In making this submission to the draft bill, we are focusing on Forest Management Certification and the benefits it will deliver for climate change, water & soil quality, biodiversity and stakeholder consultation. Forest Management Certification is almost identical to Fair Trade Coffee Certification.

Our company became the first private sector management company in Ireland to secure Forest Management Certification to FSC and PEFC status in 2019. Forest Management Certification delivers enhanced environmental performance from forests and increased public/stakeholder engagement.

At present, much of our private forest estate in Ireland is uncertified, less than 5%.

Forest Management Certification is an international accreditation that forests are managed sustainably. There are two internationally recognised standards, FSC and PEFC. Sustainably managed forests sequester more Carbon.

Amongst other things, Forest Management Certification requires the development and implementation of a professional forest management plan. The plan details actions to protect soil and water quality. It also accurately measures and details the existing biodiversity in the forest and provides measures to increase the biodiversity over time.

The upfront costs of preparing the Forest Management Plan is a serious obstacle to the development of Forest Management Certification amongst Private owners. This needs to be addressed.

We submit that Forest Management Certification must be considered in conjunction with this Bill and the following must be included in the Climate action bill with a plan to enact in the immediate term.

1. The progression and development of Forest Management Certification in the private sector requires the immediate introduction of Measure 11 of the Mid Term Review of the forestry programme. This primer will result in privately owned forests becoming certified with win wins for stakeholder engagement, biodiversity, climate change, water quality and market access. The measure is attached to this submission for your attention.
2. The minimum requirement must be the threshold determined by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine in 2018 – “the “sector needs to aim for certification of at least 40% of all private timber by 2024, increasing to 55% by 2035”.
3. Public timber procure policies must demand timber certified to FSC and PEFC standards.



Including Forest Management Certification in both this Bill and the Climate Action Bill will directly address the following measures in the programme for Government;

- Actively promote and support farm forestry/rewilding options that do not impact on agricultural production and support biodiversity and habitat creation.
- Promote close to nature-continuous cover forestry systems to ultimately create permanent biodiverse forests containing trees of all ages.
- Promote planting of 'protection forests' along rivers and lakes to protect water quality and assist in managing flood risks.
- Continue to uphold the objectives of the Forest Consent System, the Bird and Habitats Directive, the catchment management approach of the Water Framework Directive and the Forest Law and Enforcement Governance Trade regulation (FLEGT).

Including Forest Management Certification in the Climate Action Bill will directly address the following measures identified in the Climate Action Plan 2019 Annex of Actions

- Action 115 – Identify options and appropriate instruments to address barriers to increase in afforestation rates
- Action 116 – Progress the measures introduced under the governments Mid Term Review of the Forestry Programme 2014 – 2020
- Action 118 – Ensure that forests and wood are incorporated into relevant DAFM policies and initiatives – removing barriers and disincentives and exploiting opportunities. Review TAMS scheme to ensure timber specifications reflect current best practice
- Action 128 – Monitor expected indigenous biomass supply chains from materials which include forest thinning and sawmill residue. Recognise potential disruptions to supply over time. Support implementation and enforcement of biomass sustainability criteria. Support the development of a certification scheme for solid and gaseous biomass supply for Ireland.

Forest Management Certification is founded on the 3 pillars of sustainability, Social, Environment and Economic. This can be a significant contributor to the future of the forestry sector and this Bill must take this into consideration.



## Detail and Background on Forest Management Certification

*“Globally forest plantations supply over a third of the worlds timber while occupying only 7% of the land area. They play a vital role in the supply of forest products from sustainable sources, substituting timber from tropical forests assist to halt the rate of deforestation, so it is important for society to utilise sustainably produced forest products which are identified by FSC and PEFC certification”* Forestry and Climate change mitigation: the role of Sitka spruce and how its continued improvement will play a key role in climate change mitigation – Teagasc July 2020, Niall Farrelly and Ronan Cashell.

*Forest certification is a voluntary process used by forestry owners to reassure consumers that the wood and wood products they buy comes from sustainably managed forests. Certification independently assesses forest management planning and practices against a sustainable forestry management standard.* DAFM 2018

*Proctor & Gamble – one of the worlds largest consumer products companies – has committed to increase its use of FSC and PEFC certified fibre from 40% to 75% by 2025 for its Charmin, Bounty and Puffs branded family care products*

*Actively and sustainably managed forests sequester more carbon than those left to their own devices. The latest forecast by the UN FAO predicts global demand for timber to treble by 2050. This will inevitably result in still more pressure on the worlds more vulnerable forests so forest certification will be increasingly important as a means of safeguarding them -* PEFC 2020

*It is well known that forests play a key role in our battle against climate change; storing carbon while sucking in carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and locking in into their biomass –* Sir David Attenborough, UN Environment Programme.

*“forestry has to become an integrated part of farming – it can’t be forestry or farming”* Minister for Agriculture Dara Calleary, July 2020.

*“This is the most unique opportunity that has presented itself in the past 20 years to engrain forestry into mainstream agriculture whilst delivering on climate change, biodiversity and sustainability targets”* Tadhg Dooley, General Manager, Forestry Services Ltd in a submission to Bord Bia regarding the proposed Farm Sustainability Programme.



