

Western Forestry Co-Op

To whom it concerns,

I have spent the last 10 years working in private farm forestry, trying to encourage it, foster it and trying to get farmers and landowners to see the merit and potential in it as an industry for rural Ireland. I have worked in all areas of it from planting to harvesting and replanting and have come across some challenging jobs over the years but nothing could prepare any company or individual for the state of the industry at the moment. It is the most sole destroying job in the world at the moment, people who have planted trees in good faith are now being prevented from harvesting their crop. People are waiting 2 years for a licence to be issued and then for it to be appealed and end up in the FAC for another few years. I now spend 50% of my working day trying to explain to forest owners how the appeals system works "or doesn't work" and the delays involved. To say that the FAC is dysfunctional would be a major understatement.

As harvesting manager I have about 6 weeks worth of work left for our contractors who have invested massively in the industry and then we have no work but we have about 2 years worth of work in the appeals system FAC.

I have timber mills ringing every day looking for timber and have thousands of tonnes on our books but can sell none of it to them because it is with the FAC and unfortunately I can see no light at the end of the tunnel. I now have to start deciding who will get the scraps of work that we have for the Autumn/Winter and who will be out of work.

So obviously I am in full support to reform the FAC and support all the changes proposed but whether it will be enough and in time I am very doubtful.

Kind regards,

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