MINISTER OF STATE MCENTEE MEETS FOREST LIAISON GROUP ON CHALARA DISEASE

Shane McEntee TD, the Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine with responsibility for forestry, has again met with representatives from the forest industry to provide them with a full update on the ash dieback disease *Chalara fraxinea*.

The Forest Liaison Group comprises representatives from all areas of the industry and they were given a scientific presentation on the recent history and evolution of the disease on the continent. Minister McEntee also gave an update on the details of the outbreak, the procedures being taken and stressed that the ash plants used from the same imported consignment related to the outbreak are currently being destroyed. The group welcomed the measures put forward by the Minister and expressed their full support for the actions being taken. The industry, for their part, volunteered their assistance and active participation in the control and eradication of this disease, mindful of the threat to the native ash species.

He reminded them that an effective voluntary moratorium from the forest nurseries on the importation of ash plants is currently in place - an action that is fully support by the industry. This, in turn, will be strengthened by the introduction of legal measures in accordance with the relevant EU legislation.

Minister McEntee indicated that he was fully aware of the dangers that *Chalara fraxinea* posed to the industry and assured them that he would take the necessary steps to protect native ash woodlands.

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