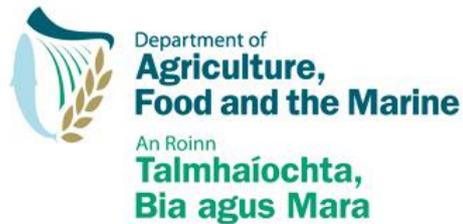


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144/14      Photos attached, captions embedded

9<sup>th</sup> October 2014

### **COVENEY WELCOMES PUBLICATION OF “FOREST RESEARCH IRELAND” REPORT**

The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Simon Coveney, TD, today announced the publication of the new Strategic Research Agenda for Forestry in Ireland “**Forest Research Ireland (FORI)** – *meeting the needs of Ireland’s forest sector to 2017 and beyond through research and innovation*”.

**Forest Research Ireland (FORI)**, which was developed under the auspices of the sector-led COFORD Council Forest Research Working Group, involving a wide diversity of stakeholders and co-ordinated by Research Division of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, captures specific policy, knowledge and production focused research topics and ideas relevant to the needs of forest stakeholders.

Speaking at the launch earlier today, the Minister said “*I believe that this Strategic Research Agenda, which aims to guide public investment in forest research, identifies the scientific knowledge gaps required to be addressed to help underpin the continued expansion, productivity, optimum resource utilisation and added value opportunities within the forestry sector*”.

FORI identifies research areas which will help address the protection of our forests’ resource at a time of increasing threat, together with the delivery of ecosystem services at a time of increasing demand on the resource and all within the wider context of the challenges and opportunities of climate change.

Minister of State Tom Hayes TD, with responsibility for Forestry added “*The importance of continued investment in excellent science for Ireland’s forest sector cannot be understated.*”

*Investing in research is a central part of the Food Harvest 2020 strategy. Indeed, it is also a central part of this Government's Action Plan for Jobs insofar as it ensures that scientific research is better targeted at turning the good ideas of our talented researchers into new products and processes and ultimately high quality jobs."*

Concluding, Minister Coveney thanked the COFORD Council and acknowledged the role of the forest industry, and also the participation of all stakeholders in the development of FORI and stated "*As always, stakeholder participation is crucial to ensure that the research remains relevant to end user needs*".

#### **Notes for editor**

There are three competitive, research funding programmes operated by the Department, namely, the Food Institutional Research Measure (FIRM), the Research Stimulus Fund (Stimulus), and the Programme of Competitive Forest Research for Development (CoFoRD).

The ***Programme of Competitive Forestry Research for Development (CoFoRD)*** is DAFM's competitive public good forest research funding programme that aims to develop a scientific foundation and support for a sustainable, competitive, market orientated and innovative forest industry and is the main programme for funding forestry research in Ireland.

**FORI** is primarily intended to guide the content of Calls under DAFM's CoFoRD Programme but can also be used to inform the nature of other publicly funded forest research. It comprises a menu of policy, knowledge and production focused research topics and ideas prioritised for funding, with the flexibility to be utilised and adapted in a dynamic manner during that period. The publication of FORI re-affirms the Department's on-going commitment to research, development and innovation in the forest sector.

The **COFORD Council for Forest Research and Development** is a representative body from the Forest Sector in Ireland. The Council advises the Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine on research and development issues in the forest sector.

#### **COFORD Council Forest Research Working Group (CCFRWG)**

In 2012 the COFORD Council established a Working Group to develop a National Strategic Research Agenda for the forest sector. This Group, co-ordinated by DAFM Research Division, was named the COFORD Council Forest Research Working Group (CCFRWG). Members of the CCFRWG included COFORD Council members, representatives from university, the growing and processing industry as well as relevant Government Departments and Agencies, and the private sector.

**ENDS**