



Press Release 29 May 2019

Doyle announces publication of DAFM's 'Forest Statistics Ireland 2019' Report

Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Andrew Doyle T.D., today announced the publication of the Department's annual Forest Statistics Report for 2019. This Report is prepared annually by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

Launching the report, the Minister commented, " 'Forest Statistics - Ireland 2019' is an annual compilation of statistics on the forest estate and the forest industry in Ireland. It is the definitive compendium of up-to-date information on forestry in Ireland and is the go-to reference document for anybody interested in the subject. There are a number of highlights in this year's report including that the proportion of broadleaf afforestation in 2018 was 27%, up from 21% in the previous year. This is a direct result of the measures we introduced in the mid-term Review of the National Forestry programme last year."

Ten key statistics from ***Forest Statistics - Ireland 2019*** include:

1. The national forest estate is 11% of the total land area. Forest cover is estimated to be at its highest level in over 350 years at 770,000 hectares;
2. During 2018, 4,025ha of new forests were created. Farmers have accounted for 82% of private lands afforested between 1980 and 2018.
3. An estimated 12,000 people are employed in the forest and wood products sector.
4. In 2018, €95 million was spent by DAFM on forest activities including afforestation, maintenance grants, annual premium payments and grants for forest road infrastructure. Since 1980, over 22,000 private land owners have received grant aid to establish forests. The average size of private grant-aided afforestation since 1980 is 8.7 ha.

5. Over half (50.8%) of forests are in public ownership, with the remainder in private ownership.
6. The national forest estate is an important carbon reservoir, amounting to 312 million tonnes of carbon.
7. Nationally, conifer species are the dominant species present, representing 71.2% of forest area while broadleaved species accounted for 28.7%. The proportion of broadleaves in new forests created during 2018 was 27%, up from 21% in the previous year.
8. The most recent annual figures estimate that 3.22 million m³ of roundwood was available for processing (excluding firewood), with 676,000m³ coming from privately owned forests.
9. The construction of 74km of private forest roads was funded during 2018. This reflects the projected increase in timber and wood to be harvested which is expected to double by 2030.
10. The most recent figures estimate that there are nearly 30 million visits to Irish forests each year, and values forest recreation at €179 million per annum.

Minister of State Doyle also commented that “The information in this annual report has multiple applications for policy makers, NGOs, Community groups and industry alike. This Government’s commitment to forestry is evidenced by the investment of €95 million in 2018 on forest activities including afforestation grants, maintenance grants, annual premium payments and grants for forest roading infrastructure. This will yield dividends in a number of ways including in the rural economy but most importantly in Ireland’s efforts to tackle climate change given the role which our forests play in carbon sequestration.”

Note for editors:

The Report is available on the Department’s website at: www.agriculture.gov.ie/forests-service/forests-service-general-information/forest-statistics-and-mapping/annual-forest-sector-statistics/

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