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Doyle launches pilot Forestry Knowledge Transfer Group

Andrew Doyle TD, Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine with responsibility for forestry, launched a pilot Knowledge Transfer Group scheme for forestry at the AGM of Limerick and Tipperary Woodland Owners Ltd., in Hollyford, Co. Tipperary, today.

Introducing the new pilot scheme, Minister of State Doyle commented “*Management of your forest asset enhances your ability to derive a good return. While there are a number of support schemes available from my Department such as the Forest Roads Scheme, my Department is also seeking to assist forest owners in other ways. One way is the development of a Knowledge Transfer Group (or ‘KTG’ as they are known in other sectors) for forestry, the pilot scheme of which we are launching here today. By removing the knowledge gap that exists amongst some forest owners, the Department hopes to assist forest owners to become forest ‘managers’. Forests managed pro-actively by their owners will, I believe, result in more productive and more sustainable forests.*”

The pilot project is to test the feasibility of a Knowledge Transfer Group (KTG) scheme for forestry, the focus of which will be on mobilisation of timber and biomass and will be modelled closely on the Department’s existing Knowledge Transfer Groups for beef, sheep and other sectors of agriculture. The aim of the KTG scheme is to increase the level of forest management activity amongst participating forest owners, and to increase awareness amongst participants of the value of their forest and, in particular, the potential value of biomass. Three existing forestry groups are taking part in the pilot and there will be multiple KTGs within each group; these forestry groups cover counties Limerick, Tipperary, Clare and Donegal. It is intended that the pilot will have up to 300 forest owners participating across 15 KTGs.

The Minister of State acknowledged the input of the Group, noting *“My Department had done extensive research on the feasibility of KTGs for forestry during 2015 but it was a result of a meeting between the Limerick and Tipperary Woodland Owners group and my Department back in June last year that the idea of a KTG for forestry started to take shape. I understand that this group along with the other forestry groups involved in the pilot, with the assistance of Teagasc, have been contributing to the development of the scheme.”*

He also commented on another initiative by his Department in the area of Forest Certification and the recent launch of the new “Felling Guidance Tool” which aims to help maximise returns from forestry. In concluding his address to the Group, he added, *“We currently have forest cover of 10.5% of Ireland’s land area, compared to the EU average of 34%. We are working together to expand this forest area in a sustainable way so that the many benefits that it brings can be realised to the full extent possible. You, as forest owners, and this Group make a huge contribution to achieving that objective and I am sure that our efforts, combined with those of others in the sector, will assist in the ongoing development of forestry in Ireland.”*

ENDS

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

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An Roinn Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara

Tá an t-eolas san ríomhphost seo, agus in aon ceanglán leis, faoi phribhléid agus faoi rún agus le h-agaigh an seolaí amháin. D’fhéadfadh ábhar an seoladh seo bheith faoi phribhléid profiúnta nó dlíthiúil. Mura tusa an seolaí a bhí beartaithe leis an ríomhphost seo a fháil, tá cosc air, nó aon chuid de, a úsáid, a chóipeál, nó a scaoileadh. Má tháinig sé chugat de bharr dearmad, téigh i dteagmháil leis an seoltóir agus scríos an t-ábhar ó do ríomhaire le do thoil.