

# Factsheet 8

## The Rural Network for Northern Ireland

August 2011



### Sharing & Exchanging Information

Sharing and exchanging information is key to the work of the Rural Network for Northern Ireland. We will share and exchange information in a number of ways.

These include:-

- A dedicated website [www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk](http://www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk)
- Newsletters, publications and fact sheets
- Events, meetings and visits

This Factsheet provides information on forestry and the incentives available to plant woodland.

Please Note: The information contained within this Factsheet is for information only.

### Forestry

A look at the importance of Forestry and incentives available to increase woodland in Northern Ireland.

#### WHY ARE FORESTS IMPORTANT?

Forests are an important source of raw materials, providing wood that supplies a huge variety of sectors e.g. construction, carpentry and paper production. Forests are equally as important environmentally – providing rich ecosystems and mitigating the effects of climate change. Forests are enjoyed recreationally and can be utilised for anything from scenic walks to fast paced mountain biking. If forests are managed wisely they provide an endlessly renewable supply of materials and environmental and social benefits for everyone.

#### WHAT ABOUT NORTHERN IRELAND FORESTRY?

Northern Ireland is extremely lacking when it comes to woodland, with 6% woodland cover, compared to the European average of 44%. Almost 80% of our woodland is in the form of relatively new conifer plantations.

#### ...AND ACROSS EUROPE?

Forestry contributes significantly to the future strategy of the EU, and unlike **other parts of the world, Europe's** wooded areas are growing thanks to effective afforestation programmes. To date:

- 16 million forest owners in the EU,
- 177 million hectares of forest or woodland
- 5 million people work in forest sector
- Output in wood based manufacturing sectors is worth over €500 billion.

#### WHAT INCENTIVES EXIST TO PLANT WOODLAND IN NORTHERN IRELAND?

Under the NI RDP there are various grants available for anyone interested in planting trees on their land.

##### 1. Short Rotation Coppice Scheme

What is it?

The scheme provides grant aid for the establishment of Short Rotation Coppice (SRC) willow for an energy end use. Short Rotation Coppice is a specialised form of forestry plantation and involves growing high yielding varieties of willow at close spacing and harvesting them at regular intervals every two to three years.

Who can apply?

The scheme is open to those on agricultural holdings.

What can be funded?

Funding is only available for the cost of establishment of the Short Rotation Coppice (SRC) willow crop and the minimum area is 3 hectares.



### 2. The Farm Woodland Premium Scheme

#### Who can apply?

Applicants must be running an agricultural business. As all applicants must also apply for the Woodland Grant Scheme, only one joint application is needed. What can be funded? The land to be planted must be agricultural land and each application must be for at least one hectare. Land for growing Christmas trees is not eligible.

### 3. The Woodland Grant Scheme

#### Who can apply?

All landowners  
What can be funded? The scheme provides grant aid for the establishment of new woodlands and the minimum application is 0.2 of a hectare. Christmas trees will not be grant aided.

### 4. Forest Environments

#### What is it?

This measure aims to secure significant environmental benefits through the enhancement of biodiversity and improving the public amenity of woodlands. It also aims to assist in achieving the expansion, maintenance, enhancement or restoration targets set out in the native woodland Habitat Action Plans, or benefits to the habitats of those woodland species covered by the Species Action Plan. Grant assistance is available through the following schemes:

- (i) The Sustainable Forest Operations Grant which provides annual payments for five years for agreed forest-environment actions that will secure significant environmental benefits from woodland.
- (ii) The Woodland Environment Grant which is a one-off discretionary capital payment for up to 50% of approved costs for environmental projects

such as control of invasive species and for improving the public amenity of existing woodland.

#### Who can apply?

Private woodland owners

#### What can be funded?

These payments will be aimed primarily at semi-mature and mature woodland areas, although premature woodlands may, in some cases, be eligible for payments.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information on all these schemes is available on the Forest Service website, [www.forestserviceni.gov.uk](http://www.forestserviceni.gov.uk)

#### News You Can Use

Do you have information worth sharing? Help us to contribute to the transfer of information sharing practice within and across the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme.

Contact the Rural Network for Northern Ireland:-

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Email: [info@ruralnetworkni.org.uk](mailto:info@ruralnetworkni.org.uk)  
Web: [www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk](http://www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk)

The Rural Network for Northern Ireland is a member of:

- UK National Rural Network:
- European Network for Rural Development <http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/>

The Rural Network for Northern Ireland has also established links with the Ireland National Rural Network: [www.nrn.ie](http://www.nrn.ie)



The Rural Network for Northern Ireland is managed by the Northern Ireland Rural Development Council (RDC) through the Agri Rural Form as part of the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme co-financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development on behalf of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD).

References and links to any external websites or publications shall not be taken as an endorsement by the Rural Network for Northern Ireland of the opinions expressed or services provided by those sites and publications.