

Wallace Launches Coford Publication On The Environmental Impact Of Planting Broadleaves On Acid-Sensitive Soils

Ms. Mary Wallace T.D., Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food with responsibility for forestry, today officially launched the latest COFORD publication entitled "The Environmental Impact of Planting Broadleaved Trees on Acid-Sensitive Soils" in the Hilton Hotel, Charlemont Place, Dublin.

Speaking at the launch, Minister of State Wallace advised that *"Afforestation is a carefully regulated activity in Ireland. The Forest Service guidelines, which are administered on the ground by the Forest Service Inspectorate of my Department, cover biodiversity, water quality and many other facets and activities that are part of afforestation project design and implementation. Allied to the guidelines is the need for measures to protect water quality in areas designated acid sensitive by the Forest Service and the Environmental Protection Agency. At present all afforestation proposals in these areas are subject to a test which determines whether or not the site will be planted"*.

Referring to the publication, the Minister of State commented that *"Essentially the report asks the question: is there a case for revisiting the planting of broadleaved species, particularly native and naturalised trees, in areas designated as acid sensitive."* She outlined the approach taken by the authors and their findings and congratulated them for the thoroughness of their work and for providing food for thought. The Minister of State also thanked COFORD for providing the report and other well-presented, high quality information that enables forest policy and measures to be continually examined and kept up to date.

Minister of State Wallace concluded by announcing that over EUR2 million has been allocated for research on forests and water under the National Development Programme. She went on to say that calls for proposals in this important area, and in support of the implementation of the Water Framework Directive, have just been issued under the Research Stimulus Fund of her Department and under the COFORD/EPA call.

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