

Wallace Welcomes Results Of Forestry Inventory

Opening the National Forest Inventory Conference in the Heritage Hotel, Portlaoise today, Ms. Mary Wallace T.D., Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food with responsibility for forestry, commented "the lack of information on the composition of our forests, in relation to species, timber volumes and biodiversity, has been an impediment to the sustainable management and utilisation of the national forest resource".

The National Forestry Inventory (NFI) was undertaken by the Forest Service of her Department to address this issue. The Inventory is the first purely statistical approach to forest inventory undertaken in Ireland to provide an assessment of growing stock volume in both public and private national forest estates. It involved a detailed nationwide field survey of the forest estate, which began in November 2004. The Minister of State added "This Conference is an opportunity for us all to understand the process, hear the primary results and appreciate the uses of the data from this National Inventory".

The results of the Inventory confirm that the total forest area in Ireland now stands at 10% of the total land area of which 57% is in public ownership and 43% in private ownership. Almost two thirds of national forest estate is less than twenty years old.

Minister of State Wallace advised "the completion of this survey will enable Ireland to fulfil international reporting obligations and monitor the sustainable development of the forest resource in Ireland. Data from the NFI will be used to estimate carbon stocks through the calculation of forest biomass figures in Irish forests and greenhouse gas emissions associated with land use change".

Publication of a NFI Ireland Results document will be in November 2007. The results document will contain detailed information on the current national forest estate. Two further publications will also be published in November 2007. A NFI Ireland Methodology publication will describe how the inventory was carried out and a publication detailing the proceedings of the conference will summarise the entire NFI from start to finish. It is also intended to undertake further analysis of the data collected particularly in relation to biodiversity and timber supply.

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