

Establishing a Farm Forest

How do I get the work done?



The First Step

Contact your local Teagasc Forestry staff via your local Teagasc office or via www.teagasc.ie/forestry for independent advice and information on:

- How a forest enterprise can improve farm and household income
- The effect on other farm schemes and farm enterprise
- Indicative returns, timber and non-timber benefits
- How to get the job done right first time

Grants and Premium Payments

The Afforestation Grant and Premium Scheme is available from the Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. Funding is available under a range of Grant and Premium Categories (GPCs) including:

- Afforestation (GPCs 1-8)
- Native Woodland Establishment (GPCs 9-10)
- Agro-Forestry (GPC 11)
- Forestry for Fibre (GPC 12 a&b)

The grants available in these schemes generally cover most/all of the costs associated with establishment and early management. The rate of grant and annual premium available under GPCs depends on the land quality, the tree species appropriate and the area of land planted.

The first instalment of the grant (75%) is payable after planting and covers operations such as ground preparation, drainage, fencing and planting.

The second instalment (the remaining 25%) is paid four years after planting, once the trees have become fully established and are free-growing. This payment covers maintenance works (e.g. vegetation management and replacement of failures).

Preplanting applications are submitted to the Forest Service, and technical approval may be issued following assessment. Establishment operations can begin only once subsequent financial approval has been obtained. The first instalment is then paid after planting, subject to adherence to scheme conditions and various environmental guidelines.

How do I get the planting done?

The option you choose should reflect your circumstances and the amount of time you can allocate to planning, organising and doing the work. It is important that your investment is managed to the highest standards to ensure you reap the rewards as the timber matures.



Take the opportunity to participate in forestry field evenings and training courses organised by Teagasc and the Forest Service.

Ensure that you have a written contract between you and your Registered Forester (see box) in place before any work begins. All contracts should be referred to a solicitor. The Forest Service sets the standards and approves grant and premium payments. Once you have decided to plant, you can choose how to get the job done from the list of options described below.

Registered Foresters are professional foresters, either consultant foresters or attached to forestry companies. These foresters / forestry companies are registered with the Forest Service and carry professional indemnity insurance. A list of Registered Foresters is available from your local Teagasc Forestry Adviser, the Teagasc Forestry website www.teagasc.ie/forestry or from the Forest Service, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Johnstown Castle, Co Wexford. Lo-Call 1890 200 509 or 053 9163400.

No matter which option you choose, all the paperwork at pre-planting, post-planting and at the second instalment stage must be prepared by a Registered Forester working on your behalf.

Option 1: Organise the establishment work yourself

This is the most hands-on option, so you must invest time in gaining a good knowledge of forest establishment and management techniques.

You are required to employ a Registered Forester to help prepare and to submit your application to the Forest Service. Only when written financial approval has been received can the work start.



John King from Co Kilkenny planted under Option 1
“I had time to do the job myself and I wanted to learn more about my investment and to know how my trees are growing”.

All sub-contractors hired, such as machine operators for mounding and drainage must be fully tax compliant. When the work is completed, the same Registered Forester submits an application to the Forest Service for payment to you of the first instalment grant and the first forest premium payment. Proof of ownership and farming status are required at this stage. Your site may also be subject to a Forest Service inspection after four years prior to payment of the second instalment grant. You, the applicant, must be prepared to fund all costs until the grant has been paid by the Forest Service.

Option 2:

Hire a Registered Forester to organise some or all of the establishment work.

Employ a Registered Forester to submit your application to the Forest Service. Only when written approval has been received can the work start. The Registered Forester will coordinate some or all of the work, as they will have knowledge of subcontractors and machine operators and can source trees and other materials.



Martin Peyton from County Mayo planted under Option 2

“Planting would have been a big undertaking on top of the day to day farming. This way took the pressure off and was as hassle free as can be. I am very happy with my choice.”

Some of the work can be carried out by you, as agreed with your Registered Forester in the written contract. You, the landowner, must be prepared to fund all costs until the grant has been paid by the Forest Service, unless there is an agreement to mandate the grant to the Registered Forester. The works and the costs involved should be specified in a written contract.

Most Registered Foresters establish and maintain plantations under a 4-year contract and usually request that the grants are mandated to them.

You are responsible!

Prior to the payment of the second instalment grant at Year 4, you, as the forest owner, must be satisfied that the forest has been maintained in accordance with best forest practice and only if you are happy with your plantation should you sign the relevant form (Form 3).

No matter which option you choose, the Forest Service Inspector will assess a sample of sites at pre-approval stage, post planting stage and at year 4 stage, so do not assume that standards have been checked by a Departmental Inspector.



Planting land is a major decision and you should be satisfied that the establishment option you choose is right for you.

Talk to your local Teagasc Forestry Adviser who will help you with free, independent and objective advice.

It is important to keep in mind that you, as the applicant, have ultimate responsibility to the Forest Service for your plantation.

Insurance against potential hazards such as fire and windthrow is strongly recommended to protect your investment.

Before Deciding to Plant - Summary

Planting is a major decision and all implications should be examined:

- Is some of my land suitable for forestry?
- What proportion of my land is enclosed or unenclosed?
- Are there environmental restrictions on my land, e.g. NHA, SAC, hen harrier SPA?
- Will planting help maximise family farm income into the future?
- What proportion of my land should I plant?
- What rate of annual premium will I qualify for?
- How will planting affect the following:
 1. Basic Payment/Greening Scheme
 2. Areas of Natural Constraint (ANC) Scheme
 3. Agri-Environmental Scheme(s)
 4. Nitrate Calculations
 5. Stocking level calculation
- Which Grant and Premium Category (GPC) will suit me best?
- If buying land with the clear / sole intention of planting: ensure that the land is eligible for forestry grant aid prior to purchase.
- Forestry is a long term commitment: most profits will be realised after approx. 30 to 45 years in the case of conifers. Felling the forest before financial maturity is likely to result in substantial opportunity cost in terms of potential returns.
- You are changing land use from agriculture to forestry. This means that after harvesting the timber, you will have a legal obligation to re-establish a forest.

Applying for Planting Approval

- As it takes a period of time for the application to be assessed, make sure to apply for planting approval early to catch the planting season, which normally runs between December and April.
- It may be helpful to seek references from existing forest owners when selecting a Registered Forester, one of which is required to co-apply with you for planting approval.
- Include any areas you are unsure of in the application, as you can plant as much or as little of the area that receives approval afterwards.

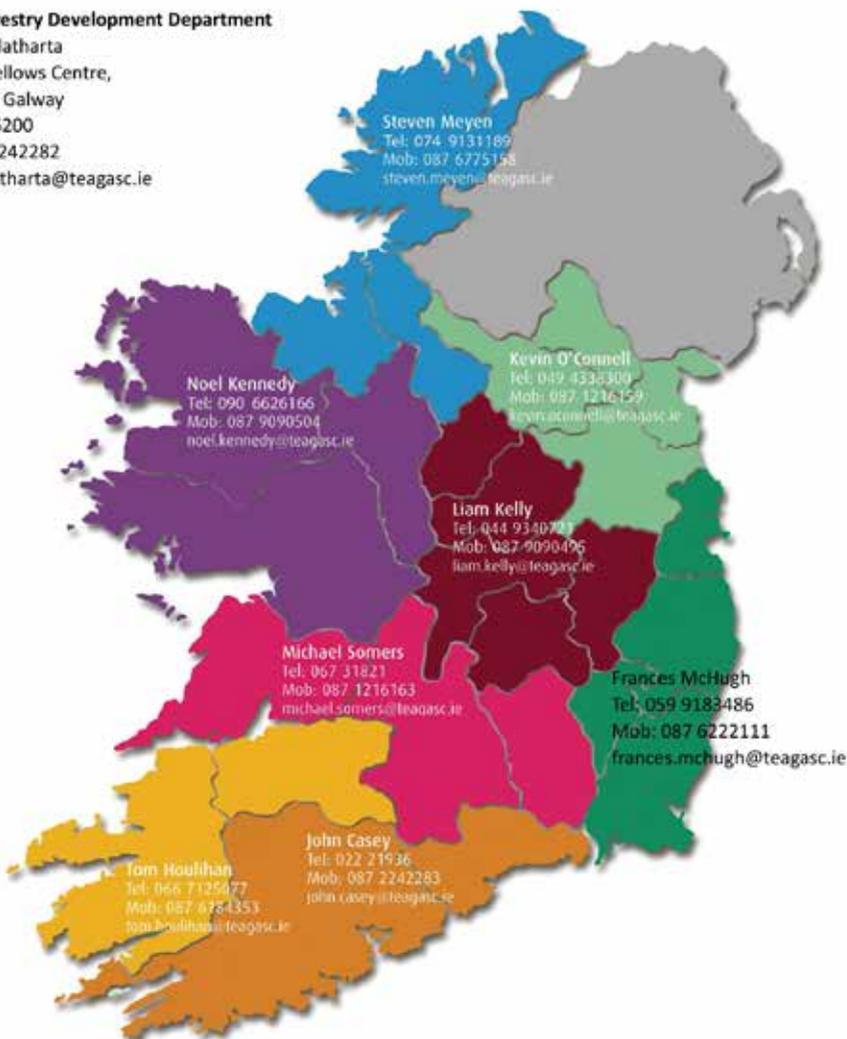
A properly established farm forest represents an appreciating tax-efficient asset, a good pension scheme for you, and a valuable inheritance for future generations. It will also help support the local rural community, benefit the environment and act as a source of renewable energy. Ongoing management is critical for success.

For all your forestry advice and training needs

Contact your local Teagasc Forestry Development Officer:

Head of Forestry Development Department

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Teagasc, Mellows Centre,
Athenry, Co Galway
Tel: 091 845200
Mob: 087 2242282
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www.teagasc.ie/forestry



How can Teagasc help you?

Operating nationwide, Teagasc Forestry Advisers provide independent services on every aspect of forestry to all landowners.

Services include:

- Advice on planting land and implications for your farm enterprise
- Advice on land suitability and environmental considerations
- One-to-one advice on the management of forests of all ages
- Forestry field evenings, on-site farm forestry demonstrations and training courses

For more information on Afforestation Grant and Premium Categories, please read this brochure in conjunction with **Teagasc Farm Forestry Series No.18** *“Afforestation Grant and Premium Scheme 2014-2020 - A Guide to Grant and Premium Categories”*

Keep in touch ...

Up-to-date and detailed information on:

- forestry grant schemes
- forestry staff contact details
- contact details for Registered Foresters
- and much more

Info available from

www.teagasc.ie/forestry

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