

Carr, Philip

From: Gerry Douglas [Gerry.Douglas@teagasc.ie]
Sent: 22 December 2005 12:08
To: Carr, Philip
Subject: Forestry Act update

Dear Philip

I undertake research in genetic improvement of hardwoods in Teagasc and I'm interested in increasing the tree planting here and in increasing the uptake by farmers of the very generous planting grants on offer.

I'm sure you have had many submissions in relation to the Act revision and I have been wondering about one point.

Currently, land assigned to growing trees is confined to forests in perpetuity.

Has Ireland given legal undertakings to The European Commission in relation to this point as it applies to afforestations over the past 10 years ? in other words do you know if our grant aiding of afforestation (via co-funding from Europe) is conditional on this perpetuity clause ?--- was it part of a deal we agreed with Europe?

I believe that a major dis-incentive to farmer uptake of afforestation is the perpetuity clause. I also believe that at the end of the first rotation, the vast majority of land would be re-planted with trees because the economic costs of re-conversion to agriculture would be prohibitive and because the social, economic and environmental benefits provided by the first crop will have shown the benefits of forestry to the landowner.

Many thanks
With regards
Gerry

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