

Private Plantation Owner Submission on Draft Forestry Programme 2014 – 2020: IRELAND

Proposal on in relation to introduction of a single rate (i.e. no distinction between farmers and non-farmers).

The Forestry Programme 2014 – 2020: IRELAND introduces a major change in the premium rate for plantations, through the introduction of a single rate with no distinction between farmers and non-farmers, which was previously considered a significant contributor in the qualification process. This has a significant side effect on farmers with existing plantations that are in need to divest their plantation i.e., it more economically attractive for new private non-farmer investors to create new plantations rather than take over ownership of existing plantation (still in receipt of premium payments) created prior to 2014. While the priority of the afforestation scheme is to create new plantations, the management of the scheme must consider the current economic climate from which we are coming from. The scheme should not put at a disadvantage the farmer who is participating in the current scheme (as approved under the National Development Plan 2007 to 2013) but in financial need to divest their forest plantations to sustain their remaining agricultural holdings. As the new scheme removes the distinction between farmers and non-farmers, change of ownership for existing plantations should also allow this provision.

I propose that the new scheme (Forestry Programme 2014 – 2020) should make provision in relation to the Change of Ownership / Change of Applicant of a plantation founded under the current scheme allowing the new owner to migrate to the new scheme in the case of new applicant being a non farmer. The migration should translate to the payment of grant premiums proposed under the new scheme for the relative number of years remaining under the current scheme e.g., for 12 years premium remaining for a 20 year grant period, then migration to the new scheme would see a new period of payment of 9 years being applied to the new applicant. This proposal to migrate is beneficial to all parties; it provides a more saleable plantation in support of the farmer, provides the new owner with the necessary grant support to manage the plantation, and reduces the state's burden of grant provision.

Table: Migration from Current to New Scheme – Proposed Premium Payment Periods

Current Scheme – 20 year Period (Years)	New Scheme- 15 year period (Years)
20	15
16	12
12	9
8	6
4	3
0	0