

Farm Forestry Case Study



Fintan Rice, Fethard, Co. Tipperary

I farm with my wife Valerie and son Louis in Fethard, Co. Tipperary. I commenced farming in 1982 and I am the 3rd generation to farm this land. The farming enterprise I took over from my father in 1996 was dairy, beef and tillage. In 1997, I converted the total farm, 185 acres to organic farming. This was not common at that time, but I made my decision based on future environmental and biodiversity concerns.

In 2000, 30 acres were planted with Ash & Sycamore with a further 45 acres planted in phases over 5 years (Ash, Sycamore, Oak and Alder). 110 acres remained in an organic dairy farming system. I decided to plant a further 30 acres in 2023 under the native woodland scheme with more being considered over the coming years. I also availed of the Woodland Environmental Fund for the 30 acres. This provides a once off €1,000 per ha in addition to the annual income tax free forest premium of €1,103 per Ha per year for 20 years. I continue to receive my BISS and retain ownership of the land. All forest establishment was undertaken without herbicide or fertiliser.

Unfortunately, the Ash is infected by Ash dieback. We are going to replace this crop with other broadleaf species under the Reconstitution scheme. Thankfully, we planted a variety of species and only a portion of my forestry is impacted by this deadly disease.

My decision to plant broadleaves was not based solely on the annual forest premium. The environmentally beneficial impact of broadleaf woodland was the main factor in the decision to plant.

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