

Looking forward to the future with forestry.



We interviewed County Cork farmer James O'Sullivan, who has over 20 years experience of forestry. James currently farms 80 acres with 55 acres of this turned over to forestry, he also runs a business from his farm making wood products including garden furniture and patios.

How long have you been involved in forestry?

Since 1989 that's 23 years ago almost. My forests are managed by SWS Forestry.

What was the thing that made you think about going into forestry?

When I went into forestry it was fairly new. I had worked abroad in the food industry for a long time and was thinking about how best to utilise the land that I had. I identified the areas of my farm that were only suitable for forestry. It was about a 30 acres strip. I looked at all the forestry companies and SWS Forestry shone through, they had a very professional approach to what they were doing. They had a good sales team out there and I think my decision to work with them has been vindicated over the years.

I understand you have several different areas of forestry now, because one part is at the thinning stage and then you have started a new plantation as well?

That's right, I have four areas of forestry in total. The last area was completed just before Christmas. The area that I did first of all, the 30 acre strip was just suitable for the conifers, which is a fast growing crop and these were put in for thinning in 2010. Thinning is something which every forestry has to go through at around the 20, 22 year stage, again the information and advice I got



from SWS Forestry saw me through this and they have helped me at all stages.

In very recent times I have given over more of my land to forestry, to a broadleaf plantation. I think this is a great legacy to leave behind, a large quantity of broadleaf trees like oak, ash and silver birch. At this hour of my life I would like to look back in years to come and have this legacy of 55 acres of forestry left for future generations.

Did you know much about Forestry when you started out with this, or have you learnt it as you went along?

I knew very little about forestry, I have relied on the advice from SWS Forestry. When I initially looked at forestry companies they shone through and over the 22 years I have received great service and a great management programme from them. From the technical people, down to the people who do the planting and the spraying they do a very professional

job, anytime I have a query about forestry I just ring them up and they have the answer at their fingertips.

Great, so would you recommend them to other farmers who might have a similar situation to yourself?

I have recommended them to other people and they have gone in and performed well for them. I would say the service is not just with the planting of the trees there is a lot of documentation after that that has to be followed through. For instance I will give you a quick example, there was an area of my land that I was unable to forest because of overhead power lines and I had to be compensated by the ESB for this and SWS Forestry had that particular problem well covered and made it very easy for me to deal with the ESB.

So you are finding that forestry is a good investment for you?

Yes I do. There is magnificent return from forestry. I get approximately €206 per acre per year for the next 20 years from what is very marginal land; no other product will give me that kind of return.

I think it's a great thing to be able to look forward to the future and say for the next 20 years I will get so much per acre. It's to be highly recommended and I think people should really consider it as a worthwhile investment.

**For a free consultation contact your local forester Michael Connolly 086 2583773
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