

# Looking forward to the future with forestry.

SWS Forestry interviewed farmer Patrick Mc Gowan, Co. Sigo, who has just planted some of his land with SWS Forestry Services. Patrick currently farms 80 acres with 30 acres of this turned over to forestry.

## How long have you been involved in forestry?

I am relatively new to the forestry sector; I planted some of my more marginal ground approximately six months ago now. My forest is being maintained by SWS Forestry.



## What influenced you to go into forestry?

I was thinking about how best to make use of the land that I had that was being under utilised, land that was not giving me much return. I identified the areas of my farm that were only suitable for forestry. The main deciding factor was that when I compared the money generated from farming the 30 acres or converting it to forestry, there was no comparison; Forestry was far more

beneficial to me. The premiums available for forestry offered me a much better return. The weather we have been experiencing also played a part in making my decision. The land was difficult and the wet weather left it hard to do much with.

SWS Forestry did a very professional job planting it. I did look at other forestry companies but SWS Forestry had a very professional approach to what they were doing.

## How many acres did you plant with SWS Forestry Services?

I planted 12.3 hectares or just over 30 acres with SWS Forestry. They planted a mixture of conifer and broadleaved trees in my plantation. I was very happy with the job they did planting it and the finished product, my plantation!

## How did you go about making an application for forestry?

Well, I suppose firstly I made contact with the local SWS Forester in the region, Edward McTernan. I arranged an on site assessment of the ground with the Edward to see if the land was suitable for forestry and what were the planting options. Edward came out to walk the land with me, he took a few soil samples on site and advised me on what trees would be best suited to the site. It was great because there was no pressure on me to plant the consultation was free with no obligation on me to plant. I was impressed with what was on offer and I informed Edward McTernan that I did wish for an application to be submitted for my land for planting approval. Edward McTernan then took it from there. I didn't need to worry about a thing Edward and his back office team in the SWS Forestry head office took care of everything.

## What stages were involved?

Firstly there was the site assessment, following on from that was the application of the lands for approval to the Forest Service. The application for approval involved surveying the area and outlining what tree species would be planted, also what operations would be undertaken and any environmental considerations. SWS Forestry dealt with all the queries from the Forest service and submitted any additional reports or information they required. When I got approval I decided to go ahead with planting.



**Who assisted you with these steps? What costs were involved?**

SWS Forestry did this for me at no cost to myself. The SWS forester – Edward McTernan, looked after all of this. So I got an on site assessment and a forestry application undertaken on my lands free of charge.

**Did establishing forestry on your land affect your current agricultural payments?**

No, and this was one of the main decisions why I choose to plant my underproductive land. The current situation is that I retained both my Single Farm payment and my forestry premium. Also because I am in REPS, my forestry application was a FEPS application. This means that I also retain my current REPS payments.

**What influenced your decision to plant with SWS forestry Services?**

I approached other farmers in the area who planted and asked them which forestry company was the best company to go with. SWS Forestry's name to come up the most and there was very good feed back from all the people who got them to plant their land. I found out that the SWS forester, Edward McTernan, was fairly local and this made it more convenient and reinforced my decision plant with SWS Forester their forester was local and based in my area.



**In your opinion has this decision been a good one and why?**

This has been a great decision. SWS Forestry has developed my forest to the highest standard and they continue to maintain it to the same standard. Only last week they were down to spray and grass clean it. Their Forester – Edward McTernan is always only a phone call away if I have any queries.

**What costs did you incur in establishing your plantation?**

I didn't encounter any costs as all the costs are covered by grant aid. Ground preparation, plants, planting and fencing was carried out by the forestry company. The landowner does not incur any costs when establishing their plantation.

**Who will maintain your plantation now that it's established?**

SWS Forestry is mandated to maintain my forest for the next 4 years at no cost to myself. This is great incentive for planting as I won't have to worry about the plantation and once it reaches the 4 years it will be established.

**Would you consider planting more of your land with SWS Forestry?**

Since I have only planted my land 6 months ago I won't be planting anymore at the moment. Yes, if I decide to plant any more land into the future I definitely will be using SWS Forestry.

**Would you recommend SWS Forestry to other landowners who want to establish forestry, If so why?**

Yes, I would recommend SWS Forestry to any landowner who may be thinking of planting some land, I have done so already.

The main reasons I would recommend SWS Forestry is for the professional manner in which they carried out the work on my land. Their contractors completed the job to a high standard. I did not have to worry about a thing, SWS Forestry carried out all of the works on the site and also all of the paper work, I didn't have to worry about a thing. Also SWS Forestry are continuing to maintain my forest now that it's established, this is important as I require their experience.

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

I didn't know much about forestry at the start and I am only learning at present. I now know more about the different forestry schemes that are out there, and what benefits there are from them, than I did at the start. If I have any queries on forestry I just ring SWS Forestry.

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

There is a good return from forestry. I get approximately €200 per acre per year for the next 20 yrs from what was very underproductive ground, now with



my annual forestry premium It is very productive. If anyone has underproductive ground I'd highly recommend planting it and I think people should really consider it as a worth while investment.

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For a free consultation contact your local forester

Head Office 1800 928 900

[www.swsforestry.ie](http://www.swsforestry.ie)