

## **For Immediate Release**

### **RDS – FOREST SERVICE IRISH FORESTRY AWARD WINNERS 2011**

Tuesday, October 18 – The annual RDS - Forest Service Irish Forestry Awards presentation took place today in Farmleigh House, Dublin. Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine with special responsibility for Forestry, Mr Shane McEntee T.D., was in attendance to present these prestigious Awards.

There are two award categories. The Farm Forestry Award is presented to farmers or co-operatives that have excelled in forestry for commercial use. The Bio-Diverse Forestry/Woodlands Award is given to an individual or organisation that has helped develop or expand a new or existing forest habitat through natural and environmentally sensitive methods.

The winner of this year's Farm Forestry Award, which included a cheque for €2,000, a perpetual trophy and an RDS Silver Medal, was Mr Michael Murphy from Clonmel, Co. Tipperary. In the same category, this year's Merit Award and a cheque for €1,000 was presented to Mr Victor Dunne from Gorey, Co. Wexford.

A best New Entrant Award was made in each category this year in recognition of the increasing number of new people who become involved in forestry each year. The best New Entrant in the Farm Forestry Category and recipient of a RDS Certificate of Merit and a cheque for €500 was Mr Ross Buchanan from Burt, Co. Donegal.

The Bio-Diverse Forestry/Woodlands Award, which also includes a cheque for €2,000, a perpetual trophy and an RDS Silver Medal, went to Mr Jack Tenison from Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan. Mr Bryan Hennessy from New Ross, Co. Wexford, won the Merit Award and a cheque for €1,000. The best New Entrant in the Bio-Diverse Forestry/Woodlands category and recipient of a RDS Certificate of Merit and a cheque for €500 was the Hyde Family Woodlands of Ballinasloe, Co. Galway.

In addition to the two award categories, a Special Judges' Award was presented to Mr John Jackson, Co. Donegal. Mr Jackson has made a very significant contribution to farm forestry both on a national basis and, in particular, in his native Donegal since he first became involved in forestry in the early 1990s. Mr Jackson has hosted many field days and educational events on his farm, welcoming everyone from those involved in commercial forestry to local school groups. Mr Jackson was the IFA forestry representative for Donegal and Chairman of the IFA National Forestry Group from 2003 to 2007 also.

The RDS - Forest Service Irish Forestry Awards seek to promote excellence in timber production for commercial use and encourage diverse forest habitats for ecological benefit. As well as recognising and rewarding forest owners who are employing the basic principles of sustainable forest management on their properties, the Awards also promote the forestry industry in Ireland, the challenges it is facing, and the measures it is undertaking to provide for commercial timber production while maintaining a rich ecosystem to pass on to future generations.

The RDS has been championing and supporting the Irish forestry industry since 1740, when the Society first granted premiums which resulted in the planting of 55 million trees over 40

years. These Awards are another example of the Society's commitment to agricultural advancement in Ireland.

**-Ends-**