

FARMING LIFE

VISIT

DAERA welcomes European forestry organisation

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Forestry leaders from across Europe recently had the opportunity to share experiences about European forestry and view forests in the Glens of Antrim during a three day visit to Northern Ireland (NI), hosted by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).

During a tour of forests in the scenic Antrim coast and Glens, staff within DAERA's Forest Service discussed a range of issues with The European State Forest Association (EUSTAFOR), which included the development of sustainable forests, plant health and showcasing the excellent facilities available for tourists and local communities within our forests.

Chief Executive of Forest Service, John Joe O'Boyle, said: "EUSTAFOR members were able to view the outworking of our practices and strategies during a visit to Glenariff Forest in the scenic Glens of Antrim Coast.

"Our forests help deliver a wide range of benefits to local communities such as positive health and wellbeing and economic activity supported by tourism and timber production. It is important that we continue to share professional experience about sus-



Staff from DAERA's Forest Service recently hosted a three day visit to NI by a group of forestry leaders from across Europe. A range of issues were discussed with The European State Forest Association (EUSTAFOR), which included the development of sustainable forests, plant health and showcasing the excellent facilities available for tourists and local communities within our forests. The visit culminated with a tour of the scenic Antrim Coast and Glens. Pictured at the Glenariff Forest Park Waterfall are (from left to right): Piotr Borkowski, Executive Director EUSTAFOR, Brussels, John Joe O'Boyle, DAERA Chief Executive Forest Service, Dr. Sara Lucia, Maltoni, Head of Integrated Forest Management, Sardinia, Italy, Brian Murphy, Chief Executive, Balcas Timber and Ciprian Pahontu, National Forest Administration-Romsilva, Romania. Photo DAERA Press Office.

tainable forest management and woodland expansion with forestry colleagues across Europe."

Piotr Borkowski, Executive Director of EUSTAFOR, said: "EUSTAFOR is very grateful to the Forest Service of Northern Ireland for inviting the strategic seminar on the future objectives of our associations to Belfast. This

meeting is a significant contribution to further enhancing the co-operation among the European State Forests Management Organisations in advocating the multiple roles and benefits of sustainably managed state forests to the broad society. The results will be presented to the General Assembly in March 2019. "We are happy that this

milestone was achieved in Northern Ireland. Furthermore, the presentations of practical forest management aspects during the field session at Causeway Coast and Glens made state forests managers from all over Europe familiar with specific features of Northern Ireland's forestry and its benefits for the local people."

The European State Forest Association (EUSTAFOR) represents state forest companies, enterprises and agencies that have sustainable forest management and sustainable wood production as major objectives. The Association currently has 33 members in 23 European countries. Forest Service is an Associate member.

EVENT

Methodist Church Christmas tree festival



Getting ready for the Methodist Church Christmas tree festival in Portstewart. Picture Kevin McAuley/McAuley Multimedia

'Special Delivery,' the Postmaster said, No, it was not a parcel but the title of the Christmas Tree from Portstewart Post Office for the Christmas Tree Festival being held in Portstewart Methodist Church and Hall from 7 to 9 December 2018.

The event begins with the opening ceremony in the Church by President, the Rev Billy Davidson on Thursday 6 December at 7.30 pm and it will close with a Service of Thanksgiving on Sunday, 9 December at 7pm.

Organisers are partnering with R.N.L.I and they

have been encouraged by the support and enthusiasm across the community, fellow churches and local schools.

The theme for the festival is 'the greatest gift,' celebrating the birth of Jesus through creativity in its various forms.

A spokesperson said: "As I write some people are already working with intricate threads making symbols of the Christmas story.

"Others are creating with wood; some are even building trees from drift wood, car tyres, books and lights.

"The possibilities are endless and the outcomes spec-

tacular.

"This event is a 'must see' for your diary. There will be a Christmas cafe on going from 10am-8pm on Friday 7 Dec-Sat 8 December, serving morning coffee/tea, light lunches, afternoon tea/coffee and a warming cuppa in the evening.

"We pride ourselves as Methodists in being 'the friend of all and the enemy of none' and would be delighted to welcome you at any time in our church and to this special event," the spokesperson concluded.

NEWS

'Backstop vital for pig industry'

Sinn Féin MP Francie Molloy has said it's imperative that there is no hard border on the island of Ireland to protect the interests of pig farmers.

The Mid Ulster MP was commenting after attending a screening of a film produced by the 'Farms Not Factories' campaign on the pig farming industry in the north of Ireland in Westminster.

Speaking after the screening Mr Molloy said: "Its important that we continue to support our local pig farmers.

"The pig farming industry has seen rapid expansion over recent years and while this is welcome, we don't want to see the over-intensification of farming. The well-being of the animals must be paramount.

"Farmers expressed grave concern at the impact that Brexit will have on small farmers and the pig industry in Ireland.

"This is why it remains imperative that we don't have a hard border on the island of Ireland and the backstop - included within the Withdrawal Agreement - remains the bottom line.

"We must ensure that there are no obstacles or impediments created that would affect movement of animals cross-border."

CAMPAIGN

New documentary launched

A new documentary, 'Pig Business in Northern Ireland', produced by Farms Not Factories and Friends of the Earth Northern Ireland, was launched at the Palace of Westminster, on Monday (3rd December).

The makers say the 12-minute film exposes the true costs to pigs, people and the planet if planning permission is granted for a pig factory near Limavady that would be the biggest in the UK.

Farms Not Factories and Friends of the Earth Northern Ireland are calling for a moratorium on the building of new factory farms in Northern Ireland. They are encouraging people to sign a letter addressed to DAERA's Permanent Secretary, Dr Denis McMahon: <https://act.friendsoftheearth.uk/act/stop-monster-meat-factories>

The event was introduced by Zac Goldsmith, MP and moderated by Jerome Flynn, actor of Game of Thrones.