

PRESS RELEASE

ACA welcome the publication of the MacKinnon Report

7th December 2019

The ACA welcomes the publication of the MacKinnon report on the forestry licensing process in Ireland. According to ACA National Council Forestry Representative Paul Finnegan, ACA are ‘very pleased to note that many of the issues raised by the ACA with Mr. MacKinnon have been addressed in his report’. Finnegan added ‘Mr. MacKinnon’s highlighting of a **lack of political will** to support forestry is noteworthy in this time of heightened awareness of climate change and our Association calls on the Departments’ of An Taoiseach, Agriculture and the Environment for a renewed focus on forestry and to implement the findings of the MacKinnon report and publish their views within the suggested six week timeframe’.

Finnegan added ‘The publication of the report provides an opportunity for honest reflection by all those involved in the development, regulation and promotion of forestry in Ireland. Used positively it is an opportunity to help in refocusing of efforts in policy development for Irish forestry and making it more relevant to Irish farmers’.

‘The continuation of forestry promotion through the same channels which has delivered a downward trend in planting levels and erosion of confidence in forestry must be seriously challenged. In the ever-changing area of environmental regulation, it would be helpful if support and training were provided to upskill private sector advisors who actively provide advisory services to the vast majority of land owners in the country’ concluded Finnegan.

President of ACA Owen O’Driscoll said ‘the ACA represents agricultural advisors with a client base in excess of 55,000 farmers and is well placed to be part of the review of forestry promotion proposed in the report’.

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**For further information contact: Mr. Breian Carroll,
General Secretary, ACA
Contact details: 087 2695425**

Note to Editors:

The Agricultural Consultants Association (ACA) are the sole representative body for private agricultural consultants and advisors in Ireland. Currently the ACA have 166 member offices across all of Ireland and employ 262 Agricultural and Environmental graduates, 17 Forestry Consultants and 120 employed as either administration or technical staff. Members of ACA advise in the region of 55,000 Irish farmers, confirming the private advisory service as the largest in Ireland.