



DATGANIAD I'R WASG/PRESS RELEASE

Royal Welsh Show 2006

Forestry in Europe – bringing new benefits to the Welsh economy

A £250,000 work programme aimed at finding new ways for forestry to boost the Welsh economy is being announced at the Royal Welsh Show by Robinwood, the Forestry Commission Wales European project which aims to give rural Europe a new future.

Details of nine major research programmes by organisations across Wales – linking up with the project's partners in Italy, Germany, Slovakia and Spain – will be announced at the Forestry Commission Pavilion on Monday 24 July at 11am.

Forestry specialists from Bangor University, Coed Cymru, Mid Wales Energy Agency and Forest Research will be working with their European counterparts in the Interreg IIIc Regional Framework Operation, funded in Wales by the European Union and Welsh Assembly Government

They will be looking at how other nations are adding value to their timber and forests to enable forest to play an even greater role in ensuring a viable, ongoing future for rural communities. Individual projects will look at ways of using forests to alleviate/control flooding and forests/trees effect groundwater and hence water supply. How best to use local timber for local low cost housing, with different strategies for forestry to give

different outputs and Biofuel issues including wood fuel supply in Wales, and comparisons with partner regions.

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“The main work of the project, building up teams of specialists across Europe to look in depth at all the options and draw up a range of alternatives, is just about to start,” said Robinwood manager Kim Burnham.

“And in 12 months time we hope to announce a whole range of new alternatives which will give timber and woodlands an even more important role in supporting the rural economy,” he said.

Robinwood is one of two ground-breaking Forestry Commission Wales projects which will be showcasing their work to help provide jobs and new income across regions of rural Europe at the Forestry Pavilion.

The GATE – gaining added value from timber – will have just returned from Slovenia, where they have been helping to finalise details for an international conference in September aimed at addressing the technical issues standing in the way of more timber being used in construction in Europe.

“This conference should provide us with the information on all latest developments on timber in construction, and enable us to draw up solutions to how we in Wales can add value to our own industry by using locally sourced timber for local building,” said GATE project manager Mike Over.

Both projects have been set up by the Forestry Commission Wales external funding team. Over the last five years the team, headed up by Paul Finch, has brought more than £23 million into Welsh forestry through European funding. Add in other funds secured by the projects and the total value to Wales is more than £50 million.

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