



Case Study: Mitigation – short rotation forestry trials at East Grange, Fife

Short rotation forestry (SRF) involves planting fast-growing tree species at higher than conventional densities with the expectation of harvesting the crop significantly earlier than a standard commercial timber crop (after 8 – 20 years).

The role of forestry as a producer of woody biomass and its potential as a renewable energy source is well recognised in Forestry Commission strategies at national and regional levels. The Read Report on climate change also showed that SRF was particularly useful as a sustainable substitute for fossil fuels in heating and power generation.



Currently, knowledge of SRF in the UK is limited, so to help fill this knowledge gap a series of SRF trials is being planted in Scotland. One of the six trial sites is located at East Grange in Fife. The site is approximately 150 ha of ex-agricultural land acquired by FCS in 2007 and planted in 2009/10 with a variety of broadleaf and conifer species. It was chosen because the land is of good quality and likely to suit fast growing SRF, and there is easy access to main population centres making it a useful demonstration site and educational resource. The site also includes some 30 ha of willow short rotation coppice being grown specifically for biomass which will provide a useful comparison to the SRF.

A comprehensive, integrated package of research has been developed by Forest Research at East Grange to examine the environmental, silvicultural, economic and carbon balance effects and needs of SRF which in time will give us an holistic view of the system and its impacts. These trials are unlikely to provide much evidence-based

guidance before year five. Forest Research is currently collating existing information and also assessing some existing SRF-like woodlands, for productivity and environmental impacts.

