

Farm Woodland NEWS

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SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

The Newsletter for Participants in Farm Woodland Schemes

Contak

The Ecolots website www.ecolots.co.uk which provides free advertising for anyone wishing to buy or sell eco-friendly rural products or services now has a sister website. It is called www.contak.org.uk and is designed as a machinery ring for the conservation sector. If you wish to hire machinery in or hire yours out this is the place to go.

SFGS calculator

Version 3.0 is now available which has several new features and includes the new grant rates introduced in the spring. You can download it at <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-64zj5h>.

Did you know?



A single large broadleaved tree in a field can transpire between 500L and 1000L of water a day while a spruce tree in an unthinned plantation will only transpire about 18L a day.



Farm Woodland Plans for the LMC Menu Scheme

Author: Alex Morris, Forestry Commission Scotland

All LMC applicants who wish to enter the Farm Woodland Management option must have a Farm Woodland Plan (FWP). These should have been submitted to SEERAD by 15 August 2005 and you should receive approval by mid October.

To complete your plan you must use the Farm Woodland Plan Template, which is available from the SEERAD website or from the local SEERAD Area Office or the local FCS Conservancy Office. The template is in the format of a Word Document that requires completion by providing information on the condition of ALL your woods and what, if any, work you intend to carry out in the next 5 years. For those woods chosen for the Farm Woodland Management option within the Menu Scheme, the condition of the woods and the proposed work need to be consistent with maintaining the woods to the standard for Sustainable Farm Woodland Management (SFWM) - see ANNEX H of the Notes for Guidance for details.

There are five parts to FWP Template and each needs to be completed. However, if you choose to separate your woods because of their nature, condition or to suit your preference, you will need to summarise this in Part 1 and complete Parts 2-5 inclusive for each individual or group of woods. It will not be acceptable to subdivide individual woods. A 1:10,000 scale map showing all the woodland and related information must accompany the completed FWP Template. An annotated copy of your IACS map will most likely suffice and you will need to ensure that all the woods on your farm holding are IACS registered.

Part 1 of the FWP Template simply requires you to provide basic information on the type of woodland on the farm holding. Part 2 is designed for you to provide information on the condition of your woods, in relation to the requirements of the standard for...

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Good and bad news for red squirrels

- 90% SFGS stewardship grant now available in priority areas including their buffer zones.
- Parapox virus, carried by greys and to which reds have no immunity has crossed the Border – antibodies found recently in some greys in Dumfries & Galloway.

Pilot SFGS stewardship grant S9 – controlled livestock grazing in woodlands

43 sites covering 4,011 hectares in Scotland were accepted by Forestry Commission Scotland as 'pilot sites' for the Controlled Livestock Grazing in Woodland grant. Applications were assessed by a panel of experts and selected sites will provide a range of native woodland types and grazing scenarios.

In The Next Edition of Farm Woodland News

Woodland Burial

Sustainable Farm Woodland Management

Integrated roe deer management

Tree shelter recycling and much more!

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Editorial

Woodland Plans and woodland grazing are the two hot topics at the moment and there was a lot of interest in the woodland management option of the Land Management Contract Menu Scheme and the Forestry Commission's pilot scheme for woodland grazing. In this edition Lucy Sumsion describes the background to the controlled grazing project and Alex Morris describes how you should have compiled your LMC plan. Keep this handy for next spring if you did not apply this year.

In 2007 the EU introduces a new Rural Development Plan. The forestry sections of this will be of considerable interest to Farm Woodland owners as the Scottish Forestry Grants Scheme will be revised, again, to include some exciting new developments. Firstly, there are proposals to further encourage sustainable forest management; this is likely to include a ten year plan and possibly an annual management payment. Secondly, there will be new support for development initiatives which should encourage, and reward, anyone who wishes to engage in training, research and other activities which help to deliver the Scottish Forestry strategy outcomes.

We will also see next year a much greater integration between Land Management Contracts and the SFGS.

Much is happening and we will do our best in Farm Woodland News to keep you informed of the changes. We are always on the look out for articles; please do send in contributions or letters.

Farm Woodland Plans for the LMC Menu Scheme *continued*



SFWM, and any related work that is proposed. Part 3 gives you the opportunity to identify your objectives but also seeks information on woods that are currently subject to livestock grazing and the needs or otherwise of naturally regenerating the wood(s). Part 4 allows you, if you so wish, to identify any opportunities to increase the area of woodland, for

which you may be eligible for grant aid from Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS). Part 5 is where you identify whether or not the wood(s) is to be entered into the Farm Woodland Management option and, if so, any necessary work to be undertaken during the plan period. In addition, Part 5 can be used to identify work that could, subject to approval by FCS, be grant

aided through the Scottish Forestry Grant Scheme.

Once your plan has been submitted to SEERAD, a copy will be forwarded to FCS for their comments on the content and appropriateness of the plan. You will be informed by SEERAD whether or not the plan is acceptable within 2 months.

The inclusion of forestry options within the LMC Menu Scheme is a step in the direction of better integration of the support from the Scottish Executive for the management of land. This movement to better integration makes sense, both from the point of view of land managers' access to grants and the Scottish Executive's delivery of grants for land management. Consequently, further development of the LMC approach should lead to less division between agricultural and forestry interests. The end result should be more integrated and better managed farm woodlands.

Dates for your diary



22 September 2005
Black Grouse Workshop
Loch Lomond & Trossachs
RSPB Andy Wright, 01738 630 783

12 October 2005
Tree Council Seed Gathering Sunday, info from
www.treecouncil.org.uk

25 October 2005
FCS Seminar, Biodiversity & Deadwood, South
Scotland. Contact Christina Leslie, 01387 256111.
Cost £30

10 November 2005
FCS Seminar, Good Establishment Practice, Central
Scotland. Contact Trevor Blackburn, 0141 941 2611
Cost £30

23 November – 4 December 2005
National Tree Week, more info from
www.treecouncil.org.uk

January 2006
FCS Seminar Access & Paths for All. Central
Scotland. Contact Julie Snodgrass, 0141 941 2611
No charge

Sporting Income from New Farm Woods

Author: Ian McCall, Game Conservancy Trust Adviser.

The new farming situation brought about by the introduction of the Single Farm Payment on January 1st this year will make a major difference to land management on many properties. With no requirement to maintain stock numbers or combinable crop acreages to receive production based payments, many of the less productive land areas on a farm may become available for other land uses.

The trick is to find a profitable land use rather than one which eats into the declining Single Farm Payment. For many land managers, establishing new woodland may be one option for otherwise unprofitable agricultural acres. However, generating income from woodland is normally a seriously long-term prospect. Investment today may not yield a net income stream from timber for half a century. What will the demand for timber be in half a century?

This question will inevitably put some farmers off, despite the grants available through the new and improved Scottish Forestry Grant Scheme. Even a combination of planting grants and annual payments for taking land out of agriculture for a number of years does not always add up to a particularly attractive financial package.

When doing the sums it is worth remembering that there is a further potential income stream from new woodland, which can be realised in a relatively short space of time. This is where the effect of establishing new woodlands in the correct strategic sites and to a suitable layout and species choice for game conservation will enhance the sporting value of the property. Indeed, relatively new techniques developed over recent years by the Game Conservancy's Advisory Services of planting trees into game cover crops can add to the sporting potential and therefore value in the very first season.

The main quarry species associated with farm woodlands in the Scottish lowlands are pheasants and woodcock. Fortunately both favour similar habitats, namely warm, sheltered, sunny woodland areas with a good shrub layer. Pheasants are actually birds of the woodland edge so long, narrow strips provide greater holding capacity for them than larger square blocks. Typically, woods of 2-3 Ha can make excellent game coverts and if correctly sited may add substantially to the sporting potential of a property.

The financial benefit of planting a number of these relatively small areas impacts on a far greater area than the actual hectares planted. For example:

Farm Size	No of New Woodlands	Size of New Woodlands	Total Area of New Woodland Established	Potential Sporting Rental Increase per Ha	Overall Increase in Annual Sporting Value	Increased Annual Value per Hectare Planted
400 Ha	10	3 Ha	30 Ha	From £2 to £7	£2,000	£66

On a 400 Ha farm the establishment of ten 3 hectare woods would obviously occupy 30 Ha of land. However, the potential sporting rental of the whole property might easily be increased from £2 to £7 per Ha (net increase £5 per Ha), i.e. an overall annual increased income of £2,000 would be delivered. Therefore each hectare planted would be producing an additional £66 annual income per hectare. This would be over and above planting grant and income for taking land out of agriculture and the ultimate future timber revenue.

To achieve this sort of increase in sporting potential and therefore rental value, the woodlands must be in the right sites to hold and show testing quarry. Therefore in general they should be located on high ground. In this respect care needs to be taken to ensure they complement the overall farmed landscape. Unfortunately woods sited in low-lying areas can conflict with sporting interests. Also, riparian sites, although attracting a higher rate of planting grant than other areas, often have a negative effect on sporting value.



The Game Conservancy Instant Spinney technique of planting trees into game crop allows a new wood to provide shooting in the very first season.

The correct design of game coverts is also critical to their potential game holding capacity. In short the secret is to work on gardening principles - that is to 'keep the wind out and let the sun in'. To this end, shelter zones incorporating good hedging with further shelter rows inside which lead the wind up and over the wood, are generally ideal, particularly on the side of the prevailing wind. This type of edge with a predominance of shrubby species and low-growing berried trees offers the potential to provide an attractive visual feature in the countryside. It also reduces shading of the adjacent farm headland by keeping tall forest trees well back from the edge.

Within the all-important shelter zones, timber species can be included, although as a general rule those with a light leaf canopy which cast little shade are preferred. Of the conifers, larch and pine accomplish this better than spruces and firs. Whilst of the broadleaved species oak, ash and birch achieve the objective and are preferred to beech and sycamore, which are heavy shade-casters and shut the sun out from the forest floor.

Leaving areas unplanted is also a good way of providing sunny areas attractive to game and other wildlife species. Open space in the form of winding rides,

flushing points and sunny feeding areas all add to the appeal and success of the covert for game.

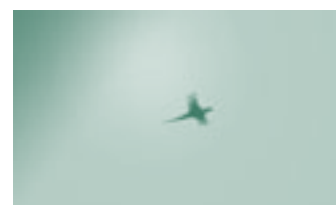
Fortunately, at the present time demand for game shooting rights far outweighs supply, so for the non-sporting farmer it should be relatively easy to realise the potential additional income from strategically-sited and designed new woodland for game. Because relatively long, narrow plantations are preferred, it should be possible to create additional shelter benefits of particular value on the stock farm. At the same time, the farmer should also have the added pleasure of delivering increased public benefits in the shape of enhanced biodiversity and visual beauty to other countryside users.

As in farming, the secret to success in game covert/shelterbelt establishment is to grow the correct species, designed in the right layout and on the optimal site for showing sporting birds. But remember with farm crops a major mistake disappears into a combine at harvest or can be ploughed up for a new attempt. With forestry and farm woodlands, errors last a very long time and can remain to haunt you not just for your own lifetime but even for future generations!



A well designed game covert shelterbelt providing cover for game, shelter for stock, timber and landscape benefits.

Unlike timber, income from increased sporting potential through new woodlands can be realised soon after planting.



Unlike timber, income from increased sporting potential through new woodlands can be realised soon after planting.

Trees & Livestock Can Grow Together

The Background Behind the West Highland Woodland Grazing Project

Author: Lucy Sumsion, Argyll FWAG Adviser

Over the last ten years there has been increasing recognition of the important role grazing livestock can play in encouraging natural regeneration and enhancing the biodiversity value of woodlands. In addition, woodlands can also provide livestock with important shelter that benefits and helps to sustain the whole farm enterprise. During 2005 Argyll FWAG has been involved in partnership with Forestry Commission Scotland, SEERAD, Scottish Native Woods and Scottish Natural Heritage in promoting both the conservation and economic value of woodland grazing through the West Highland Woodland Grazing Project (WHWGP). The project has been operating under the umbrella of the Argyll & Bute Biodiversity Partnership.

The announcement in November 2004 by Forestry Commission Scotland of the new Stewardship Grant (S9) for Controlled Livestock Grazing in Woodlands has been a major step forward and was welcomed by many farmers and conservationists. This Grant will contribute towards the costs of establishing and maintaining woodland conservation grazing schemes.

If the Pilot scheme can demonstrate that conservation grazing in woodlands can be successfully incorporated into a mainstream funding mechanism there could be significant environmental, economic and social gain achieved. It would certainly help in securing the sustainability of some farms and crofts. The WHWGP project sought to demonstrate that livestock can be regarded as another forest product and that woodlands can be managed to optimise production of a wide range of products with follow-on benefits to the local economy.

Many have been asking for some time why conservation grazing in woodlands has not been grant aided up until now? To answer that question it might be useful to recap where we are to date.

In 1997 the Forestry Commission Native Woodlands Advisory Panel (NWAP) Agricultural sub-Group commissioned a study into farmers' attitudes to, and involvement with, native woodlands (Turner 1997). This study confirmed that without targeted advisory or support initiatives the level of management activity in farm woodlands is low. With such low levels of management activity, the question was asked 'what would encourage more farmers to undertake woodland management or establishment?' Many of the surveys reviewed for the report suggested that the main requirements are grants, advice, skills or direct support. The report suggests that developing the interest of many more farmers in native woodland management will depend upon the ability of the forestry sector to work with farmers. It is necessary to recognise how farmers relate to, and value, their woodlands rather than pursue approaches and operations that do not presently enthrall them i.e. timber production.

Following the Turner report the NWAP Agricultural Sub-Group drew together the following main conclusions (Forestry Commission, 1999):

1. As farmers own about 50% of the native woodland resource they are a very important target audience.
2. A higher level of interest is shown in native woodlands than other types of woodland.
3. Many woodlands show signs of under management and threats to their future.
4. Present support mechanisms designed to encourage management and expansion of native woodlands do not always meet the needs of farmers. Farmers value native woodlands primarily for the shelter that they offer, and are reluctant to forgo this benefit despite the availability of compensatory mechanisms.
5. There is potential for conflict with agricultural support mechanisms and agri-environment packages.
6. There is a lack of knowledge of the grant schemes available to farmers.
7. There is a lack of knowledge amongst advisors who work with farmers.
8. There are constraints on sectors of the agricultural community who seek to more actively manage their native woodlands.

Many of the recommendations of the NWAP contributed to the WGS/FWPS Review "Report of the Review Steering Group" (Scottish Executive 2002). Following consultation, the report stated that "apart from potential difficulties over double funding for the same area of land, the issue here is that while too much grazing can damage trees, a total absence of grazing can lead to the development of rank vegetation and suppression of more valuable parts of the woodland ground flora. To overcome this, it is proposed that occasional domestic grazing in SFGS/SFGS:FP supported woodlands be allowed solely as a conservation/silviculture measure."

The Forestry Commission launched the new Scottish Forestry Grants Scheme (SFGS) in 2003. Conservation grazing in woodlands, however, had not been included as a management option. The WGS/FWPS Review Report had stated that "to engineer an integrated support scheme covering SAP, forage area and SFGS:FP type support would be enormously complicated." It would appear that it is for this reason that no management options, and consequently no payment rates, were drawn up under SFGS. At present the rules of the Rural Stewardship Scheme (RSS) state that the Management of Native or Semi-Natural Woodland is eligible only where Forestry Commission assistance is not appropriate to the site. Although we have seen the introduction of the Wood Pasture Management Prescription under RSS this is limited to a number of recognised sites. The reality is that very few woodland sites are considered ineligible for SFGS assistance and hence conservation grazing of native woodlands is not being pursued as a management option under RSS. Up until the launch of the Pilot S9 Stewardship Grant, SFGS was not able to grant support woodland grazing either. So conservation woodland grazing was in effect excluded from any grant funding mechanism.

It was for this reason that the rationale for the West Highland Woodland Grazing Project was drawn up. The project aimed to demonstrate how farming and forestry objectives could be integrated in a totally new and innovative way.

In February 2004 the WHWGP held a Woodland Grazing Workshop in Argyll. One of the main outcomes was recognition of the biodiversity benefits of woodland grazing and a rallying call for a more integrated and holistic approach to farm and woodland management. In March 2005 a second workshop was held in Argyll with over 100 people attending; farmers, crofters, landmanagers, foresters, advisers, researchers, conservationists and agency staff from SNH, SEERAD and FCS.

This year saw delegates coming from all over Scotland with some also traveling from south of the border.

The aim of the 2nd Woodland Grazing Workshop was to give participants the opportunity to find out more about both the science and practice of managing woodlands with livestock. This event gave more practical information and advice and promoted the sharing of experiences and information relevant to the role of livestock in woodland management.

The last year has been an extremely active one for the WHWGP; I believe that the WHWGP has been instrumental in influencing the development of the Pilot stewardship grant. We have held two successful workshops and subsequently produced proceedings for both. We have undertaken a field-based review of woodland grazing sites in Argyll & Lochaber and produced two newsletters currently with a distribution list of over 500 names. 2006 will see the delivery of a woodland grazing toolkit by the WHWGP and the setting up of a number of pilot woodland grazing sites by the Forestry Commission through the SFGS. The WHWGP Steering Group will take forward lessons learnt from the workshops we have held, paying particular attention to the need for a "practitioner-centric" approach, and also the requirement to develop a truly long term approach to the delivery of public benefits from woodland grazing. We aim to hold a series of practical site-based visits on woodland grazing over the next 12 months. If anyone is interested in receiving copies of the workshop proceedings or the newsletters and in finding out more about our programme of site visits please contact me.

The West Highland Woodland Grazing Project has been supported by the following organisations: Forestry Commission Scotland, Scottish Executive, Scottish Natural Heritage and WHELK Leader+.



Woodland Access & Recreation

Author: Geoff Atkins, Scottish Natural Heritage

Rights and Responsibilities

Everyone has the right to be on most land and inland water for recreation, education and for going from place to place providing they act responsibly. These rights and responsibilities are explained in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. The Code is based on three key principles and these apply equally to the public and to land managers.

- Respect the interests of other people
- Care for the environment
- Take responsibility for your own actions

Access rights can be exercised over most of Scotland from urban parks and path networks to our hills and forests and from farmland and field margins to our beaches, lochs and rivers.

The Code includes a practical guide to access rights and responsibilities

Planning for Access and Land Management

Many forests and woods have ongoing timber operations and the Code provides advice to follow any precautions taken by the land manager and to take notice of any signs and safety restrictions. Good practice has been established through industry approved guidance. The Code is about shared responsibilities and there is clear advice for forest managers about keeping people informed of the dates and duration of work taking place and providing alternative routes where possible.

The last issue of the newsletter described the benefits of riverside woodlands. Rivers' banks have traditionally been used as routes between communities and for recreation. Where the topography is difficult or the channel meanders across the floodplain, more direct routes have developed away from the water. By taking a strategic

with riparian activities such as fishing.

Managing Visitors

Woodlands attract visitors all year round. The Code warns of the dangers of leaving litter and lighting fires and provides detailed guidance on the management of dogs especially during the bird breeding season. Local advice through signs or codes of conduct can help raise awareness of the bigger risks at certain times of the year e.g. fires during prolonged dry periods. Some woodlands close to towns and villages in rural areas can be under pressure from summer visitors. If there are regular seasonal effects then planning for this in advance will pay dividends. By identifying and signing preferred sites for camping, say, and providing some limited facilities, the risk of problems arising will be reduced.

Access rights extend to cycling

Protected Areas

Some older and more diverse woodlands are protected areas, for example Special Area of Conservation and often they are located in difficult terrain. Opportunities to experience the natural heritage are a key part of an improved quality of life for everyone. Careful planning of paths and facilities can maximise the enjoyment of forests and woods, minimise effects in sensitive areas and manage risks associated with personal safety.

Local Nature Reserves are great places for discovering more about the natural heritage on your doorstep and woodlands are often a dominant feature. The agreement between the local authority and the owner clarifies roles and responsibilities. The community can play a big part in rejuvenating neglected woodland through active management to increase habitat, carry out new planting and improve diversity. LNRs and other woodlands are a dynamic educational resource and organised groups are permitted under the Code where the activity is within access rights.

Promoting Access

Promotion and interpretation can do much to improve people's understanding of the woodland. This can start with leaflets about the site and the facilities that are provided for walkers, riders, cyclists and others. By grading the paths according to the degree of difficulty and type of conditions that will be found people can come prepared and enjoy their visit. Well located entry points can help manage the routes people take and reinforce other messages about the site; woods and forests are great places for getting lost! Countryside Rangers play a significant role in increasing awareness, understanding and enjoyment of the natural heritage and they are applying these skills to promote understanding of the Code.

Other Legislation

As well as the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 there is other legislation that has a bearing on the way access is managed in the countryside - the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Health and Safety at Work Act



Rangers using woodland for education

which shows how these apply to the more common situations found in the outdoors. Forests and woods are covered with advice on specific activities such as, "If you are cycling or horse riding, keeping to suitable paths and tracks can help to minimise any damage". Land managers are encouraged to develop a plan to help manage access on busy sites. Paths and other facilities including interpretation will help people exercise access rights responsibly.

view of where people go and possible future demands, sensitive areas and places such as those liable to erosion can be properly managed as part of a plan for riparian woodland restoration. If fencing is necessary to manage cattle, consider where people are likely to go and build appropriate boundary crossings into the plan. Access rights also extend to rivers and lochs and in some locations it may be appropriate to work with the local authority and recreation bodies to help integrate access

and horse riding and on narrow paths, especially in dense woodland, these activities may cause problems for other people. The Code describes responsible behaviour and encourages users to give way and avoid damaging soft ground. However many land managers promote routes which are best suited for different activities and give advice to users at the main access points. This helps the enjoyment of the woodland as well as the integration of access and land management.



Woodland trail for cyclists

1974. The DDA makes it unlawful to discriminate against disabled people by refusing to provide a service or providing a service to a lesser standard without justification. Woodlands may often be in difficult terrain to achieve smooth and easy surfaces but many woods and forest cater for all ability trails close to the points of entry. If you are planning to provide new facilities to help people enjoy the woodland you will need to consider the needs of your visitors in a systematic way. A simple way of addressing these issues is to carry out a risk assessment.

Know the Code before you go!

For more information about many of the issues briefly mentioned in this article visit www.outdooraccess-scotland.com

If you would like to have a copy of the full Code phone Scottish Natural Heritage on 01738 458545 or email pubs@snh.gov.uk



Electronic Timber Marketing Report

Author: *Mike Bentley, Beacon Forestry*

Supply and demand balance beginning to favour growers.

The previously reported situation regarding increased demand and stronger competition for home-grown timber sales continues to develop. Private sector growers, including farmers with woodland, can benefit from this.

As usual it is the combined effect of a number of factors causing these price movements, resulting, at last, in better prospects for home-grown timber parcels being offered competitively.

Sawn prices in general continue to creep up in line with imported values and for some grades a shortage of imported material is causing buyers to turn their attention back to domestic supplies, thus adding new demand and allowing further price improvements.

Small round-wood and sawmill residue values, so often the reason for depressed standing sale prices, are also beginning to improve. The export market for small round-wood to Scandinavia continues and there are signs that we will see volumes increasing in the short to medium term. The energy market is also starting to take up some of the hitherto spare capacity and further projects close to becoming operational are all creating

a level of demand that very few were forecasting a year or two ago.

Add to this a domestic supply imbalance caused by a significant shortfall from FE Wales and continued exports from the West of Scotland to Ireland and you soon begin to understand why the ripples are being felt throughout most of the UK as processors from home and abroad jostle for position and make moves to secure their future raw material supplies – something they simply must have.

It really is up to land owners and managers in the private sector to now make a move of their own to secure the benefit of the current increase in demand. By offering timber on the competitive open market, a grower can find the current value without committing to a sale if the price is still not suitable.

Where now the siren calls of three to four years ago warning about the wall-of-wood about to flood an uninterested market place with virtually no outlets unless you fell in line and committed all your timber volume to a buyer/seller co-operative at a price with no minimum limit?

Those who realised that absolutes rarely happen in forestry, and seldom last when they do, took a more balanced view and left themselves able to sell into the open market when things improved. We think it is now the right time for growers in the private sector to consider trying the competitive market option. Many growers who have sold by electronic auction and tender in recent months are glad they did.

Tree Forking

Author: *Simon Jacyna, SAC Woodlands Consultant*

In previous editions of Farm Woodland News we have had articles on pruning, animal damage, singling of multiple leaders and the need to aim to produce quality timber to get the best prices.

The Forestry Commission's Research Branch has just produced an interesting information note "Development of multiple leaders in Sitka spruce and Japanese larch following outplanting" which indicates the long term costs of this damage.

In controlled experiments, half of the young trees were subjected to simulated animal browsing. After six years the browsed spruce trees were still significantly smaller than the un-browsed ones and between 45 and 60% had multiple leaders compared to about 15% of the undamaged trees. The height differential was similar for larch, but this has a greater ability to self-prune and after six years there was no difference in the percentage of multiple stems between the two treatments.

Assuming that there is no further self-pruning, multiple leaders result in a smaller proportion of sawlogs in the final crop. This is most pronounced in shorter rotation or lower yielding crops as these have smaller trees at clearfelling. In addition there is more wastage of timber from forked trees and the timber is of poorer quality with more compression wood and eccentric pith. Total output loss can be as high as 13% and the volume of sawlog material can be reduced by as much as 28%.

Currently net values of timber are about £19/tonne for Green quality sawlogs, £8 – 12/tonne for palletwood and £4/tonne for pulpwood, so the potential scale of loss is clear.

Singling might cost between £35 and £150/ha but the Stewardship Grants for Improving Timber Quality have an early pruning grant of £150 per hectare. Singling of trees up to 3m tall is an eligible operation. This might be a good time to ask Santa for a nice new pruning saw!