



## Press Release – News

15<sup>th</sup> February 2010

### **Launch of the Wood Fuel Quality Assurance (WFQA) Scheme**

A peer-nominated Oversight Committee of wood fuel suppliers are ready to launch the Wood Fuel Quality Assurance (WFQA) scheme in Ireland. It will be officially launched at the IrBEA/Teagasc Annual Conference, 18<sup>th</sup> February 2010, at the Tipperary Institute, Thurles, Co. Tipperary. Applications for participation in the scheme are currently being accepted, [www.wfqa.org](http://www.wfqa.org)

Work on the scheme has involved the publication of a National Workshop Agreement for Wood Fuel Quality Assurance - Requirements (NWA 4:2009) and the formation of a wood fuel quality assurance scheme for Ireland in conjunction with key government and non-governmental agencies / entities including:

- National Council for Forest Research and Development (COFORD) – now part of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (DAFF)
- The National Standards Authority Ireland (NSAI).
- Sustainable Energy Ireland (SEI)
- The Irish Bioenergy Association (IrBEA)
- Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT)

The quality assurance scheme will certify organisations involved in the manufacture / supply of quality logs, chips, pellets and briquettes formed from clean wood. This QA scheme will provide customers with confidence that they are purchasing a quality wood fuel from a sustainable source relevant to their needs.

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The NWA 4:2009 includes both monitoring of the supply chain process and end-product testing. Documentation requirements will ensure the wood is sourced responsibly. Customers are protected as Organisations Certified under WFQA will retain responsibility for the product quality until the point of purchase at each stage in the process.

A number of organisations are already signed up to the scheme and are currently going through the certification process. Organisations interested in achieving certification can begin the application process by logging on to [www.wfqa.org](http://www.wfqa.org) which will go-live on the 18<sup>th</sup> February 2010.

### **The WFWA Oversight Committee (Wood Fuel Quality Working Group)**

The efforts and allocation of time and expertise to date by all participants is acknowledged and very much appreciated. The Oversight Committee (developed from the working group) consists of the afore-mentioned agencies and associations and industry participants.

The Oversight Committee will oversee the operation of the scheme for the initial twelve month period; at the end of the initial twelve month period, Election of Committee Members will take place at an AGM of the Scheme.

Organisations currently involved in the Oversight Committee include;

- Forest Fuels
- Red Squirrel Logs
- Rural Generation
- Balcas
- Timberpro
- DPellet
- Smartheat
- RPS

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The wood fuel industry has grown significantly in the past five years, and has penetrated into households, commercial premises, government organisations and industrial operations. The current demand is estimated to be 30,000 tonnes of wood pellets and 75,000 tonnes of wood chips annually. This largely indigenous industry provides sustainable fuel for heating and electricity and is a significant employer – especially in rural areas. Thanks to the participation of the wider industry, with well attended meetings in Athlone, Portlaoise and Dublin throughout 2009, the wood fuel sector has come together to form this quality assurance scheme and certification to ensure the continued growth of this market.

### **Main objectives of the scheme**

The main objectives of the scheme are to:

- Support the delivery of a product which meets and exceeds the requirements of customers
- Instil confidence in the marketplace
- Ensure the production of sustainable wood fuel
- Ensure best practice operations throughout the wood fuel supply sector.

John O’Brien, who chaired the Working Group and continues as chair of the Oversight Committee, commented: ***“The development of this scheme by key players, with the support of the sector at large demonstrates the commitment within the sector to delivery a quality product for the end user. The core objective in developing and implementing this scheme is to support the delivery of a quality product to the customer every time. Organisations who are certified under the WFQA scheme will I believe become the customers ‘suppliers of choice’ going forward”.***

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### **Scheme structure.**

- The initial registration, administration, site visit and fuel sampling will be undertaken by NSAI as part of the overall certification process
- The fuel samples will be sent directly to the Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) laboratories for testing
- Teagasc will provide fuel sampling support where follow-on sampling is required.
- Once the wood fuel site and supply has been visited, tested and certified, the wood fuel supplier will be granted the right to use the WFQA symbol on their packaging
- Initial services contracts relating to Certification, Fuel Sampling and Laboratory support will be held for a period of 24 months, at which time they will be reviewed and market tested as appropriate.
- An Oversight Committee made up of IrBEA, DAFF, SEI and key industry representatives will meet on a regular basis (not less than quarterly) to ensure the equitable and smooth running of the scheme

For further information about the launch, quotations and interviews, please contact Triona Muldoon at IrBEA:

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For all enquiries relating to the WFQA going forward, please contact the scheme directly at:

**Email:** [wfqaenquiries@wfqa.org](mailto:wfqaenquiries@wfqa.org)

**Web:** [www.wfqa.org](http://www.wfqa.org)

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