

FARM WOODLANDS AND THE POTENTIAL FOR WOODFUEL

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Over the last few years the number of modern, efficient boilers fuelled by wood has increased very rapidly. In part this is due to volatile fossil fuel prices as well as a plethora of national, regional and local targets aimed at increasing the uptake of renewable heat and power technologies. A recent survey has suggested that 1.1 million oven dry tonnes of woodchips were supplied to the energy market in 2008. A significant proportion of these chips came from forest operations. In addition there has been a boom in the number of log stoves being installed and a commensurate increase in the demand for good quality, seasoned fire wood.

These developing markets offer owners and managers of farm woodlands an opportunity to produce low carbon fuel that can be sold to a wide range of end users ranging from those using wood-burning stoves through to multi-megawatt power stations. In England, the Forestry Commission is helping woodland owners capitalise on this opportunity and has embarked on delivering a woodfuel strategy aimed at bringing an additional 1 million oven dry tonnes of wood from the private forest estate to the energy market each year. It is likely that farm woodlands will play a key role in meeting these aims. This presentation will give an overview of the market in England and some of the key considerations behind producing good quality fuels will be discussed. The Biomass Energy Centre, a small unit within Forest Research, can provide advice and guidance to those seeking to produce or use woodfuels and has links to the nationwide network of Forestry Commission Woodfuel Offices as well as many other national and regional bodies and companies involved in the bioenergy sector. More information can be found at <http://www.biomassenergycentre.org.uk>.