

RDR Regulations Responses
By email



Farm Woodland Forum
Glendale
Dounie
Road
Dunblane
FK15 9AR
6/11/04

Dear Sirs

Rural Development Regulation

The Farm Woodland Forum is a UK organisation representing a membership active in research, education, consultancy and working within government agencies associated with land management issues. In general, as a UK organisation representing farm woodlands, we welcome the opportunities suggested by this document in the agriculture and woodland sectors and the scope, where appropriate to bring these together for the good of rural communities and the wider Scottish public.

In particular with reference to some of the questions asked in the consultation we;

- 1) Support the three main objectives proposed (Question 1)
- 2) Support the general themes in the section covered by the third set of questions (the Axis Approach) and the listing of the three priority axes but note that the measures proposed do not neatly fit within each one, with overlap and multiple benefits of many likely actions. LFASS payments and the scheme itself do need revision, in the light of the changes inherent in CAP reform and many other changes in rural life but do need to reflect and maintain the social and economic objectives of this measure in its inception (rather than being an environmental measure).
- 3) Particular interest and comment is worthy on the last part of this basket of questions; "Does the proposed scope of forestry measures and the increased integration with measures to support agriculture and rural development meet the needs of Scotland's forestry sector?" We believe this is in part the wrong question. We **strongly** support the inclusion of the agroforestry measures. Such new measures build upon years of successful research throughout Europe (but with a strong Scottish emphasis) and demonstrates that agroforestry has benefits for the forestry sector (though supply and servicing markets in addition to potential for timber) but that the major benefits accrue to agriculture and biodiversity, if the initial start up costs (the trees) can be supported. Thus there is much wider benefit than merely to forestry and it should be seen as a measure covering all axes. Traditional foresters are slowly becoming to accept that agroforestry approaches are firstly not just about timber production but also actually works. But we know that our membership frequently meets the view, almost unique in Europe, that trees and agriculture do not mix. This new measure enables this myth to be broken but requires enthusiastic support and good implementation practice for this approach to be successful. We therefore urge the Executive to strongly support this measure, recognising the fact that Scotland is unique in Britain with its high tree cover and very significant farm woodlands and very significant woodland industries (up and downstream). Support should further enable the Executive to move towards targets set out in its Forest Strategy for considerably increased woodland cover, without a similar loss of agricultural production and jobs. CAP reform and changes to LFASS open up opportunities for rural development using combined trees and agriculture that have been thwarted for many years.

Developing the new measure will require new approaches and we urge the Executive to build these details in partnership with the research groups working heavily in agroforestry and farm woodlands over the years (e.g. Macaulay and SAC). If the Farm Woodland Forum can assist through its connections to a wide number of researchers and advisers with an interest, and knowledge of, integrated woodland/agroforestry development, we would be very happy to do this.

4) the establishment of networks and a European Observatory are interesting approaches which will require significant planning and careful building. We suggest that a key issue would be to ensure that integration of objectives is a major theme in building these groupings and that sectoral representation be avoided as this tends to maintain status quo, rather than foster development. The Farm Woodland Forum would be delighted to be able to be involved in such networking.

Yours faithfully

Tony Waterhouse, Executive Member Scotland, Farm Woodland Forum