

## FGS OPTION CHANGES

This Briefing Note provides information on recent changes to the Forestry Grant Scheme for the options:

- Woodland Creation
- Agroforestry
- Harvesting and Processing
- Tree Health

### Woodland Creation

Changes were made in July to the [Woodland Creation](#) section 'Discussing with your neighbours, local communities and consultees'. These changes highlight the need for early engagement with consultees and those neighbours who might be directly affected by your proposals. We have included reference to Confor's guidance note on stakeholder engagement and have recommended the use of an issues log to help record potential impacts from your proposal and the results of any discussions with stakeholders.

### Sheep and Trees

The [Sheep and Trees](#) grant package has been available since June and is part of the initiative which is aimed at identifying and raising awareness of the many opportunities woodland can bring to farmers and land managers. This grant package is available to upland livestock farmers where sheep are a major component. It combines the woodland creation 'Conifer' and/or 'Diverse Conifer' and [Forest Infrastructure](#) options. More details are available on the links provided.

### Gorse removal

A new capital item for gorse removal has been added to the Woodland Creation option. This is available to all Woodland Creation applications submitted from 1 September 2017. It is a standard cost capital item of £720/ha and aims to encourage landowners with some gorse sites to apply for woodland creation. Please see the specification in the [capital grant operations](#) table for details.

### Native Broadleaves in Northern and Western Isles

This [option](#) has been expanded so that elsewhere within the crofting counties it can be applied for where exposure is high and the local FCS Conservancy agrees that this is the best silvicultural option to establish a new native woodland. This option cannot be applied for in association with other woodland creation options.

Also, please note that on appropriate west coast sites Hazel will now be accepted as a native tree species under the [Native Broadleaves](#) option.

### Agroforestry

Aspen has been added to the list of suitable productive broadleaf trees available for planting in this [option](#).

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## Harvesting and Processing

We are expanding our [Harvesting and Processing](#) grant option to include support for: small scale secondary wood processing equipment, forest tree nurseries, and new specialised equipment for afforestation ground preparation. See below for details.

This option is **now open** for an extra 2017 claim year round. There is a good chance of accessing funds for the 2017 claim year, which has not had as much pressure as the 2018 claim year. The closing date for this round is 27<sup>th</sup> October.

### Secondary processing

Secondary processing equipment is now eligible for grant support and has been added under Aim 1 of this option. Grant support is 40 per cent of actual costs with a minimum grant award of £1,000 and a maximum of £6,000, per application. Please use the [Aim 1](#) supporting information template for harvesting equipment and primary and secondary processing.

### Tree Nursery and Ground Preparation

Equipment for tree nurseries and ground preparation are included under Aim 2 of this option. Grant support is 40 per cent of actual costs with a minimum grant award of £2,500 and a maximum of £35,000, per application. Please use the [Aim 2](#) supporting information template for forest tree nursery and ground preparation equipment.

## Tree Health

Following discussions with communities on the west coast islands who are dealing with Ramorum outbreaks, changes are being made to the Tree Health and Forestry Co-operation options.

### Uneconomic felling of larch for islands – first 5ha

This new standard cost capital item is being introduced for island areas where FCS is satisfied that the net cost of carrying out the operation exceeds the value of this capital item: £2,400/ha.

Due to the required changes in RP&S, this capital item will be available from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018, however for exceptional circumstances please contact your [local Conservancy](#).

### Forestry Co-operation and Tree Health

The [Forestry Co-operation](#) grant has been expanded to allow communities dealing with Ramorum outbreaks the opportunity to apply for funding in order to encourage landscape-scale collaborative projects. It is hoped that this will provide owners affected by Ramorum the opportunity to work together through a single agent in order to improve economies of scale.