Overview of impact of Storm Arwen on forest and wood-based industries.

ANDY LEITCH

DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE, CONFOR

NESAAG

26 JANUARY 2022

Confor
Promoting forestry and wood

Confor - Confederation of Forest Industries (UK)

Confor focuses on the strategic issues that individuals and businesses cannot tackle alone. Our priorities are:

- Over 1300 members from individual landowners to multinational wood processors.
- Helping to build the market for wood and forest products;
- Creating a supportive policy environment for forestry and wood-using businesses at all levels of government;
- Working with partners to tackle ongoing sectoral issues such as research, skills and business support;
- Providing high quality, valued member services.

Initial Forest industry response

- SAFETY FIRST.
- Worked with power companies providing specialist mechanised harvesting machinery.
- Provided expert chainsaw operators.
- Worked with local authorities on clearance of minor roads.
- Haulage resources used to transport supplies, such as fresh water.
- Engaged with Scottish Forestry to initiate a collaborative approach across the supply chain.

Area impacted and potential harvest

- Estimated 3500hectares windblown in Scotland but expect this estimate to increase – felling back to windfirm edges.
- Equates to 0.002% of Scotland's woodland cover (1.5Mha).
- Estimated volume of timber is 1.5-2.0M m3.
- Equates to around 25-30% of annual cut in Scotland and around 0.008% of total volume.
- Operational costs will be higher
- Volumes of wood recovered will be less than anticipated in normal harvesting operations.

Initial findings from two regional based meetings across the supply chain.

- Overall, the wood supply chain is confident it can absorb most of the windblown material over the next two years.
- An emerging issue is how to deal with the potential volume of pine that has been blown or snapped. It has a short shelf life (6 months) before it develops blue stain which affects some markets.
- Most of the pine is located in the north-east Scotland.
- Owners have been encouraged to concentrate on harvesting pine and leaving spruce on stump to fit in with harvesting and processing capacity.

Further issues

- Cohort of landowners with windblow will not be resourced to deal with situation timeously. May even need new access infrastructure.
  - Could lead to windblow not being felled.
- Certification – required to access most markets.
- Felling Permissions – engage quickly with Scottish Forestry fast track application process
- Accurate crop details for marketing – get best market valuations.
- Cost of restocking and replacing boundaries – stone or fencing.

Main markets for windblown material

Wood processors have met separately to explore how to maximise capacity to be able to effectively absorb material into market:

- Sawmills – construction timber, pallets, garden products (fencing) and other (tattie boxes).
- Panel board mills
- Roundwood fencing
- Wood energy products (pellets, residues)
- Export of roundwood?

Is there latent demand in the local authorities for some of these products?

Next steps

- Hold next national windblow action group meeting (tomorrow).
- Validate and update damage assessment.
- Identify key strategic issues and make provision for them to be addressed collaboratively.
- Engage at regional levels where required – e.g. resilience planning.