

Milled Peat Production (1)

Bord na Móna produces approximately 4 million tonnes of milled fuel peat per annum. Approximately 3 million tonnes are used for electricity generation and the remainder for Briquette production. It also produces 1.3 million cubic metres of horticultural peat per annum. For fuel peat, the target water content is 45% at harvest with a slightly higher figure for horticultural peat.

Bord na Móna uses two production systems to produce milled peat: the Peco system and the Haku system. The main difference in these two systems is in the way the peat is stockpiled. In the Peco system every eleventh field is used to stockpile the peat and it receives the output of the five fields on either side. In the Haku system the output of each field is transported in trailers to large central stockpiles. There are essentially four operations in milled peat production: milling; harrowing; ridging and harvesting.



Milling the peat



Harrowing the peat

MILLING:

In the milling operation a thin layer of peat, usually about 15mm deep, is cut from the surface of the bog where it is left to air dry over a period of a few days. This layer of peat is called a crop. Typically the water content of the crop after milling is about 80%. The miller itself consists of a number of rotating drums fitted with pins to cut the peat. It is towed and powered by an agricultural tractor.

HARROWING:

In the course of drying, the layer of peat is turned a few times to make the best use of available drying. This is achieved with a machine called a harrow. A harrow consists essentially of a series of turning elements, called spoons, which are towed behind a tractor. The spoons turn down the dry surface of the peat layer and expose the wet peat underneath to the sun and air to expedite drying.