

PALLET PHYTOSANITARY PROJECT NEWSLETTER



A Cooperative Effort of the Limestone Bluffs Resource Conservation and Development Area And The Wood Education and Resource Center

Number 6

November 2003

REGULATORY UPDATE

US Import Requirements for Wood Packaging Material

Previous issues of this newsletter have tracked the APHIS process for developing and implementing the US Requirements for Wood Packaging Material. The comment period on the proposed rule ended on July 21, 2003. APHIS is currently finalizing the rule, based on the comments received. The initial target date for implementing the rule was January 1, 2004. However, the date has been adjusted to April or May 2004.

The following update was recently published on the APHIS website:

“In anticipation of finalization of the Rule we are encouraging all importers to meet the conditions of ISPM 15 and the Draft Rule which requires that all wood packaging material be appropriately treated and marked under an official program developed and overseen by the National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO) in the country of export. Even though we are not anticipating the finalization of the Rule until later in 2004, we will start issuing notices to the NPPO’s for material not appropriately treated and marked starting in January 2004.

These notices will clearly state our intention of implementation later in the year and will serve as an information dissemination tool. No additional action will be taken on noncompliant material at this time. APHIS will follow its current policy for wood packaging material until the new Rule goes into effect.”

International Implementation of ISPM 15

With the successful registration of the no-bug mark, the participating IPPC countries, much like the US, are currently developing their import requirements based on ISPM 15. As these requirements are finalized and implemented, wood packaging producers as well as exporters will want to keep abreast of these developments. The most effective way of keeping current with the country-by-country implementations is through the IPPC website and more specifically through the NPPO (National Plant Protection Organization) tag. The NPPO tag allows access to individual countries implementation information. The participating countries will be posting their rules and implementation schedules on their respective NPPO websites as they are approved. The IPPC website can be accessed at www.ippc.int.

Methyl Bromide

Recent studies of methyl bromide fumigation in Japan and China/Korea have provided new information relating to the efficacy of methyl bromide in destroying organisms living in wood. The International Forestry Quarantine Research Group is reviewing the information in order to develop a comprehensive review of the subject and is requesting any pertinent research data or related experience from IPPC member countries. The Research Group can be contracted through Dr. Eric Allen at eallen@nrcan.gc.ca.

China Update

There has been ongoing concern over shipments to China and some indication that the wood packaging material is now being treated differently than expected according to the current published policy. A clarification on the APHIS website states that Solid Wood Packaging Regulations for US wood packaging material going to the Peoples Republic of China has **NOT** changed. More specifically, APHIS indicates that, "there is no new requirement or authorization at this time for the fumigation of either softwood or hardwood packaging materials destined for China".

If you or your clientele are experiencing problems with shipments to China we would like to identify and publicize these problems. If you have experience or examples of problems with shipments to China, please forward these to the Project Manager at curth@mail.wvnet.edu or by phone at (304) 282 5417. We will compile and distribute them via an upcoming newsletter.

STATE LEVEL GRANT PROGRAM

Twenty-three of the thirty-two states in the eastern hardwood region participated in the state level grant program, sponsored as part of the Pallet Phytosanitary Project. Each state contracted, at a minimum, to attend a Briefing Session and to sponsor at least two informational meetings for local businesses, organizations, and interested individuals. Each newsletter issue summarizes the results of a number of state cooperators who have completed their projects.

Alabama

The project cooperator is the Alabama International Trade Center (AITC). Partners in the project include the Alabama Forestry Commission and the Alabama Forestry Association. A combination of one-on-one visits with manufacturers and one information session were conducted. The information session was held in Montgomery, Alabama and was attended by 36 individuals. Nineteen manufacturers of wood packaging materials and allied mills were represented.

AITC also conducted site visits to 60 manufacturers in Alabama. Each company received a complete information kit, as well as an overview of the phytosanitary regulations and a discussion of the options for implementation. The reasoning behind the site visits was the difficulty in attracting mill owners from rural areas of Alabama to a central location for a meeting. AITC encountered significant resistance from mill owners in taking a full day to drive and hear about "another regulation that eats into profits".

AITC also provided followup assistance to 15 pallet and lumber manufacturers seeking additional information.

In general, a majority of the industry contacts had heard about the standards. However, there was confusion over the applicability to hardwoods, uncertainty regarding eventual implementation, and general lack of awareness about the treatment alternatives.

Ohio

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry is the project cooperator. The first of two information sessions was held at the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center campus in Wooster, Ohio and video broadcast to Piketon, Ohio and Burlington, VT. The Ohio locations had 40 participants, with over 80 percent representing industry representatives.

The second informational session was held in Columbus, OH with 36 in attendance. Over 90 percent of the participants were from the wood packaging industry.

Many of the speakers were from some segment of the wood packaging industry, including one pallet manufacturer, one pest control company representative, one heat-treating equipment manufacturer and one certification agency.

A number of issues were raised at the sessions, including: what is required to be compliant with the regulations and the ability to receive accurate and timely information, especially with regard to country specific requirements. A number of participants expressed a keen interest in developing opportunities resulting

from the implementation of the regulations.

COMPETITIVE GRANTS PROGRAM

The Pallet Phytosanitary Project is currently sponsoring a second Competitive Grants Program. The Request-for-Proposals (RFP) was released on November 24, 2003. A total of approximately \$90,000 is available to support proposals in applied research, technology transfer, and demonstration projects. The program is open to universities, colleges, research organizations, non-profit associations/organizations, Federal, State, and local government agencies, and private businesses. All proposals require a cost-sharing component.

Deadline for proposals is 4:00 pm CST on December 31, 2003. Copies of the RFP can be obtained from the USDA Forest Service website:

www.na.fs.fed.us/econaction/palletnews

The RFP can also be requested electronically from the Project Manager at curth@mail.wvnet.edu. Questions about the RFP should be addressed to the Project Manager at (304) 282-5417 or via email at curth@mail.wvnet.edu.

VIDEOS AVAILABLE

Pallet Phytosanitary Project cooperators in Connecticut and Massachusetts (Forest & Wood Products Institute at Mount Wachusett Community College) and New Hampshire (University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension) have developed two videos related to wood packaging phytosanitary issues. The first is entitled "NeLMA's

Inspection Program for Wood Packaging” and is presented by Jeff Easterling, President, Northeast Lumber Manufacturer’s Association.

The second video is entitled “Heat Treating Methods for Pallets” and is presented by Dr. Brian Bond, Assistant Professor, Virginia Tech.

Both videos are well done and contain a great deal of valuable information. Several copies of the videos are available free on a first-come-first-served basis. A modest shipping charge may be required. Requests should be directed to Rob Rizzo at:

Forest & Wood Products Institute
Mount Wachusett Community College
444 Green St.
Gardner, MA 01440-1000
Phone: (978) 630-9137
Fax: (978) 630-9554
Email: Rrizzo@mwcc.mass.edu

UPCOMING SEMINAR

The University of Minnesota Extension Service is sponsoring a seminar entitled “Wood Packaging and International Standards” on December 18, 2003 at 220 Skok Hall on the University of Minnesota’s St. Paul Campus. The seminar will start at 3pm and end at 4:30pm.

The seminar agenda will include:

- An Update on the International Phytosanitary Standards
- An overview of the results from a survey of wood packaging customers
- General Discussion

Presenters include Tim Smith, University of Minnesota Department of Wood & Paper Science, Mike Reichenbach, University of Minnesota

Extension Service, and Sergio Molina, University of Minnesota.

For reservations, contact Susan Seabury at (218) 879-0850 ext. 108 or via email at sseabury@umn.edu.

For general information about the seminar, contact Mike Reichenbach at (218) 879-0850 ext. 123.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Those receiving this newsletter represent a rich source of information regarding the issues, problems, and successes that the wood packaging industry is experiencing. Likewise, you are no doubt providing information, solutions, and support to your clients. The Project Team would like to compile these issues and any solution you have developed and share them with your colleagues and the industry through this newsletter. We would deeply appreciate you forwarding your experiences to the Project Manager (via email at curth@mail.wvnet.edu or by phone at (304) 282-5417) so that we can compile the information and share it in a future newsletter or bulletin.

MISCELLANEOUS

Please feel free to distribute this newsletter via email or hard copy to all interested parties.

This issue of the newsletter and all subsequent issues will be posted on the following USDA Forest Service website:

www.na.fs.fed.us/econaction/palletnews.

Suggestions and items for upcoming newsletter issues are welcomed. Contact Curt Hassler, Project Manager, at (304) 282-5417 or via email at curth@mail.wvnet.edu.