

PALLET PHYTOSANITARY PROJECT NEWSLETTER



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

Number 5

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REGULATORY UPDATE

Importation of Solid Wood Packing Material

The USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) completed its program of public hearings on the Proposed Rule to amend the import regulations for Wood Packaging Material. APHIS is proposing “to adopt the IPPC guidelines because they represent the current international standard determined to be necessary and effective for controlling pests in wood packaging material used in global trade, and because current US requirements for wood packaging material are not fully effective. It is important to remember that the proposed US rule is an import rule and does not impose requirements on US companies exporting to other countries. It only imposes requirements on other countries importing into the US.

Three public hearings were held: June 23, 2003 in Seattle, Washington; June 25, 2003 in Long Beach, California; and, June 27, 2003 in Washington, DC. A total of 14 speakers participated in these hearings. Nine of the speakers simply asked questions or requested

clarification of certain issues in the Proposed Rule.

Of the remaining five speakers, four spoke against the Proposed Rule. Their consistent themes were that the Proposed Rule provides inadequate protection against invasive pests and were in favor of APHIS prohibiting solid wood packaging material in favor of alternative materials such as manufactured wood materials, metal, plastics, etc. Additionally, they were opposed to the continued use of methyl bromide due to concerns over ozone depletion. These speakers represented the Seattle Audubon Society, Defenders of Wildlife the Washington Environmental Council, Defenders of Wildlife, and the American Lands Alliance.

The remaining speaker, from the National Wooden Pallet and Container Association, was generally supportive of the Proposed Rule. One concern was over the language that allows individual countries the option of imposing a higher level of phytosanitary protection than the international standard provides. An additional concern was the ability of “plant protection agencies to promulgate additional rules as needed to address additional pest risks on a case-by-case basis”. The NWPCA argument is that the ability to make

exceptions to the Standard eliminates harmonization, effectively nullifying the treaty and opening the door to retaliation between countries.

The NWPCA speaker also made a strong case for solid wood packaging material over alternative materials such as metal and plastic. He specifically cited the non-biodegradable properties of plastic, new fire ratings for warehouse facilities that handle reinforced plastic pallets, and the recyclable potential of wooden pallets.

The full transcripts of each public hearing are available on the APHIS website.

The written comment period for the Proposed Rule ended on July 21, 2003. APHIS received a total of 45 unique comments and 805 form letters related to the Proposed Rule. The APHIS representatives at the public hearing indicated that the goal for producing a Final Rule is early 2004, with January specifically mentioned.

Accredited Heat Treatment Agencies

The American Lumber Standards Committee, Inc. is authorized to accredit and monitor organizations engaged in the inspection of facilities reducing heat (HT) or kiln-dried heat-treated (KD HT) lumber for use as solid wood packaging material.

A total of eleven agencies are now certified to conduct inspections. The most recent addition to the list is:

Lee Inspection & Consulting Services,
Inc.
2207 California Plaza, #3B
Bossier City, LA 71171
Phone: (800) 508-6232

Fax: (800)-508-5531

Email: dkstokes@dixie-net.com

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.

New York

The New York program was a cooperative effort of the Hudson Mohawk Resource Conservation and Development Council and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

Two phytosanitary informational meetings were conducted. The first was held in Buffalo and was attended by 18 individuals, representing 13 companies. The second meeting was held in Cheektowaga and had 14 participants from 12 companies.

Speakers at the workshops included representatives from 360Solutions Group, Package Research Laboratory, and Pest Heat. Both workshops were well received by the participants, evidenced by lively discussion both during and following the meetings.

North Carolina

North Carolina State University was the project cooperator. Two

informational sessions were held: one in eastern NC and one in western NC to minimize the time and expense for small producers. The eastern session was held in Nashville, NC with 16 attendees. Approximately 63 percent of the attendees were pallet or wood packaging producers.

The western NC meeting was held in Hickory and attracted 32 participants, 70 percent of which were pallet or wood packaging producers.

The various topics presented at each session were by representatives of North Carolina State University, Timber Products Inspection, and SII Dry Kilns. The attendees were most interested in the different available treatment technologies and the cost effectiveness of those treatments.

North Carolina was also a partner in the Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference, Expo, and Demonstration on the International Phytosanitation Regulations for Raw Wood Packaging and Pallets in Charlottesville, VA. The 91 participants were comprised of pallet producers (49%) and hardwood lumber producers (14%).

Tennessee

The Tennessee program was a cooperative effort of the University of Tennessee Forest Products Center and the Tennessee Forestry Association. Informational meetings were conducted in Knoxville and Jackson. The Knoxville meeting had 30 attendees and the Jackson meeting had 10 attendees. Topics included a discussion of compliance requirements, treatment, certification, marketing, heat treatment and methyl bromide fumigation. Speakers were from the University of Tennessee, the National Wooden Pallet and Container

Association, APHIS, and the National Hardwood Lumber Association.

Some of the concerns expressed by participants included the timing for implementation of the standard and the costs of compliance.

COMPETITIVE GRANTS PROGRAM

With this newsletter we are continuing to provide more detailed descriptions of projects funded under the Pallet Phytosanitary Project Competitive Grants Program.

Clemson University Project Leader: Tim Weigel Title: An Evaluation of Alternative Materials for use in the Construction of Pallets

The intent of this research project is to evaluate a variety of engineered wood products to determine whether their physical and mechanical attributes are sufficient for substituting these materials for solid wood in the production of pallets. Additionally, the project includes a performance comparison between alternative materials (engineered wood products and plastic) and solid wood in the production of pallets.

Evaluation of physical and mechanical properties will be performed at the APA testing laboratory in Tacoma, Washington. Strength and stiffness of notched stringers made of LVL (laminated veneer lumber), plywood, and OSB (oriented strandboard) will be determined. Joint separation resistance will be conducted on joints composed of stringers made of LVL, plywood, and OSB and deckboards made from solid wood and plywood. Two high quality pallet nails (one annularly threaded and one helically

threaded) and pallet staples will be evaluated for separation resistance. Full-size testing of pallets constructed of alternate materials and solid wood will be undertaken. The wood pallet used for comparisons will be a NWPCA spec Q type wood pallet. The remaining configurations to be tested include three styles manufactured from alternative materials and two styles of rackable plastic pallets. Flexural strength and stiffness will be determined in a racked across stringer, racked across deckboard, and a fork tine support configuration. In addition, impact resistance of the leading edge deckboard and the pallets stringer/blocks will be tested.

The project results will provide information to evaluate the suitability of a variety of engineered wood products that might be substituted for solid wood components.

Virginia Tech

Project Leader: Chen Zhangjing

Title: Application of Vacuum to Control Insects in Raw Wood Packaging Materials.

This project is designed to investigate the vacuum control of insects in solid wood packaging material. Low pressure, achieved by applying vacuum to a system, reduces the amount of oxygen in the environment and imposes a controlled atmosphere. Atmospheres at low pressure are sufficiently low in oxygen to eliminate the insects in several hours to days.

This method has been used effectively for controlling species infesting stored-food packaging, some of which are closely related to species infesting wood.

The research will be conducted on infested, green red oak rough dimension, 3.5 inches thick by 3.5

inches wide by 2.5 feet long. During testing, pressure will be controlled at 20mm HG and temperature at 20 degrees C. Eggs and larvae of the longhorn beetle (*Hylotrus bajulus*) will be used in all evaluations. This species is used as a substitute for the Asian Longhorn Beetle (*Anoplophara glabripennis*). Life stages of *H. bajulus* are available from laboratory colonies and are approximately the same as *A. glabripennis*.

Larvae will be inserted through 1 cm diameter holes, 4 cm deep and then securely plugged with a dowel. Five to seven day old eggs will be placed in 0.5 mm crevices on the surface of test specimens and then covered with by a piece of test wood during testing.

Mortality will be checked at five different time frames: 5, 10, 24, 48, and 120 hours. Twenty-five pieces will be tested in each time frame. Larvae mortality will be determined by movement of the larvae within 3 hours of removal. Eggs will be removed and placed on moist filter paper in a petri dish and maintained at room temperature. Mortality will be determined by egg hatching, which for *H. bajulus* usually occurs with 10 days of oviposition.

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.