

International Standards for Wood Packaging Material

The Challenge

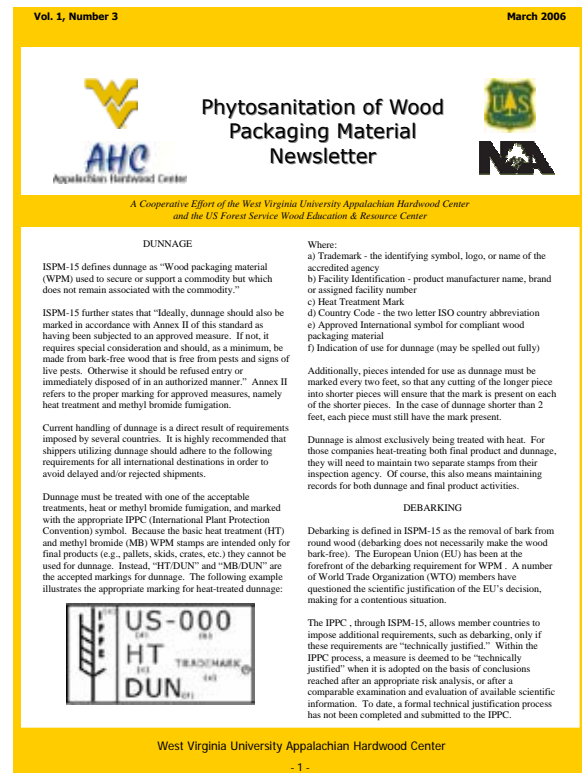
To reduce the spread of pests that affect plants and plant products, the International Plant Protection Convention adopted new regulatory standards in March 2002 for the treatment of wood packaging material used in international trade. These standards are outlined in Guidelines for Regulating Wood Packaging Material in International Trade ISPM Publication Number 15. The standards affect all wood packaging material used in exporting that contains unprocessed, raw wood. Pallets made of solid wood account for 80 percent of all packaging material used by both small and large exporters in the United States and are therefore subject to these standards.

The regulations could have a negative impact on wooden pallet and container manufacturing businesses as well as related businesses. The pallet industry normally operates on tight profit margins. As pallet manufacturers increase prices to offset the increased cost of wood treatment, solid wood pallets could be replaced by pallets manufactured from other materials. With 40 percent of all hardwood lumber produced in the United States currently being made into solid wood packaging, the new regulations could adversely affect the wood pallet industry as well as the larger lumber and stumpage markets.

The Solution

The USDA Forest Service Wood Education and Resource Center provided funding to the Limestone Bluffs Resource Conservation and Development Area to provide technical information to the forest products industry about the regulatory changes in treating wood packaging materials. This collaborative effort also included the USDA Forest Service Northeastern Area Economic Action Program, National Association of State Foresters, and the National Wooden Pallet and Container Association. The partners developed a comprehensive Web site (http://ahc.caf.wvu.edu/index.php?option=com_content&task=section&id=8&Itemid=113) to explain the new standards and their effect on the business practices of pallet manufacturers and exporters and to provide information related to the new requirements.

Solid wood packaging materials used in exporting are subject to new treatment standards.



Periodic newsletters provide key information to pallet and container manufacturers.

Resulting Benefits

- Helps exporters understand wood packaging material treatment regulations
- Increases awareness and knowledge about phytosanitation issues in international markets and new developments in cooperating States
- Provides updates to changes in regulations
- Provides a network of technical expertise

Sharing Success

- Newsletters and technical bulletins about specific topics that affect manufacturing businesses are available on the Web site free of charge.
- University and State forestry agency partners have shared this information with manufacturers of wood pallets and containers through workshops, word of mouth, and electronic means.



USDA Forest Service
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