



# Phytosanitation of Wood Packaging Material Newsletter



*A Cooperative Effort of the West Virginia University Appalachian Hardwood Center  
and the USDA Forest Service Wood Education and Resource Center*

## No News is Just News Waiting to Happen

The Interim Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (ICPM) 4 (2002) adopted ISPM No. 15 in March 2002, with a scheduled revision date of 2007. Several things are being reviewed/discussed/studied in preparation for this revision by the Technical Panel on Forest Quarantine (TPFQ) which works under the umbrella of the International Forestry Quarantine Research Group (IFQRG). IFQRG was created to address the forestry related topics covered by the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).

Based on the Report of the Fourth Meeting IFQRG Meeting (Rome, Italy October 2-6, 2006) twelve issues were identified ranging from “Terms of Reference” to “A review of the concerns related to the international movement of plants for planting”. Obviously, phytosanitation of WPM was not a focus of all of these. The issues most germane to WPM manufacture and use are addressed below.

### Debarked/Bark Free WPM

This was Issue 6 titled “Review of Bark Information”. It was recognized that there are a number of areas where definitive answers are not available about the impact of bark on WPM. A survey was designed and sent out with the request for all National Plant Protection Organization’s (NPPO) to participate. The survey, explanation, and instructions can be found at:

<http://www.ippc.int/servlet/CDSServlet?status=ND0xNzE0NTEmNj11biYzMz0qJjM3PWtvcw~~>.

The deadline for submission of surveys was extended to May 31, 2007.

Existing bark on otherwise properly treated WPM is a critical factor in determining if pests on/in the WPM is due to failure of treatment or infestation after treatment. One of the action steps to come out of this meeting was to develop a protocol for testing to determine how many of the pests detected on marked wood packaging are present due to treatment failure versus infestation after treatment.

### Alternative Acceptable Treatments

This was Issue 7 and three possible alternatives to heat treatment and methyl bromide were listed.

- *Microwave/Radio Frequency*

A report on testing in the U.S. indicated that the ability to effectively treat wood in a very short time to levels sufficient to match the existing requirements for heat treatment or methyl bromide. IFQRG agreed that an expert group should be established to develop a technical summary of the efficacy of this treatment in accordance with the proposed ISPM No. 15 for submission of treatments.

- *Fumigation*

A summary presentation of previous deliberations concerning WPM fumigation in general was presented to the group. The group agreed to review the literature available regarding the efficacy sulfur dioxide as an additional treatment for ISPM No. 15. A technical summary of the efficacy of this treatment is planned in accordance with the proposed ISPM No. 15 for submission of treatments.

- *Chemical Impregnation (CI)*

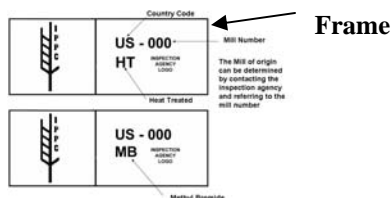
No reports were made to the group relative to chemical impregnation but the suggestion was made to continue studies on CI. Any combination of treatments or a stand alone treatment will be considered if supported by data.

## IFQRG's Drafting of BMP's for ISPM No. 15 Treatments

While not one of the twelve issues of the October meeting, one of the action steps put forth was to consider the need to draft practical guidelines on best practices for ISPM No. 15 treatments covering efficacy, human health, and safety, and environmental considerations.

### Much Ado Over Standardized Marking

Over the course of the past several months some sixteen e-mails were addressed to the ISPM No. 15 Listserv concerning "allowable" variations from the standard mark. This all apparently began when a shipment was refused at a port of entry because the inspectors deemed the treatment marks to be unacceptable because they did not match the standard model as presented below.



The complaint revolves around the question of whether the rectangular frame enclosing the critical information provided in the mark is required. Opinion fell pretty evenly into three categories of:

1. Frame required.
2. Frame optional.
3. Those that could understand both arguments.

In the U.S., APHIS (Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, United States Department of Agriculture) is the National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO) and contracts with the American Lumber Standards Committee (ALSC) to oversee the implementation of ISPM No. 15

for WPM used to export material from the U.S. abroad. The stance of these two agencies is that the frame is an integral part of what is essentially a copyright or trademark and must be included to be considered legitimate. They further state that if the frame is not required and the "interpretation" of what constitutes a legitimate ISPM No. 15 stamp is allowed to broaden, falsification of marks may rise proportionally. The lack of a frame has led to some investigations into bogus markings originating in the U.S.

The responsibility for allowing/disallowing importation of material and any WPM that comes along for the ride falls to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). DHS relies on APHIS to define legitimate markings but has sole authority to decide what is or is not an acceptable ISPM No. 15 mark. Based upon wording in the Code of Federal Regulations Title 7: Agriculture Part 319—Foreign Quarantine Notices Subpart—Logs, Lumber, and Other Unmanufactured Wood Articles, the only specific "penalty" for WPM without the required mark is immediate reexport. However, until recently, other wording in this same section, "An inspector at the port of arrival *may* (italics added) order the immediate reexport of regulated WPM..." was interpreted to mean they may also specify other solutions/penalties. The alternative to reexport was retreatment (fumigation) or offloading the material on the WPM and subsequent destruction of the non-compliant WPM, the cost borne by the importer or exporter. These types of allowances had to be carried out in bonded facilities and were mostly of the offload type. For some time this worked with waiting times of 8 to 10 days for a bonded warehouse to become available. However, in recent months problems with non-compliant WPM have led to waiting periods of weeks to months at some ports of entry. In order to reduce this traffic jam the "letter of the law" is to be the guide which is "reexport". The entire document mentioned above can be viewed at:

<http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&sid=64938ae67d906f1fc8ba68b478241a07&rgn=div6&view=text&node=7:5.1.1.1.6.8&idno=7>.

A recent flurry (late May, early June 2007) of ISPM No. 15 Listserv e-mails has continued the debate. One from Nancy G. Klag, Deputy Director, Phytosanitary Issues Management USDA, APHIS, appears to further clarify the U.S. stance. In his message he states that it is Custom and Border Protection (CBP, part of DHS) that oversees the inspection of imported material. He states that "Noncompliance for CBP in relation to penalties

mainly refers to material with no mark or material with a mark with live wood pests. CBP has recently set a penalty structure under their regulations (Title 19) for repeat violations of either no mark or presence of timber pests.” The emphasis being NO mark or presence of live pests as opposed to a mark without a frame around it.

## Methyl Bromide Update

A recent posting on the EPA website related to the continued phase out of methyl bromide (<http://www.epa.gov/ozone/mbr/>) may have resulted in a recurring concern over the loss of one of the two available treatment methods to meet ISPM No. 15 standards. While the use of methyl bromide is being reduced, aiming for a total phase out, there are exemptions, including the Quarantine and Preshipment (QPS) exemption, to eliminate quarantine pests, and the Critical Use Exemption (CUE), designed for agricultural users with no technically or economically feasible alternatives. While these sound like they would cover wood packaging, in fact, they do not.

A response to an e-mail directed to the contact listed at that website generated the reply that the use of methyl bromide for ISPM No. 15 falls outside the jurisdiction of the EPA and within the jurisdiction of the USDA APHIS, specifically “*ISPM is separate from the critical use exemption process. The critical use exemption is for approved critical users who have no technically or economically feasible alternatives to methyl bromide, in the agricultural sector.*”, with referral to the APHIS website. As of this writing there is no change in the approved use of methyl bromide for wood packaging material.

Another group of recent announcements (late May early June 2007) from both APHIS and EPA also relate to WPM and methyl bromide (MB) use. These amount to APHIS and EPA working to “get on the same page” with each other as well as considering the recent changes to the ISPM No. 15 MB fumigation schedule. Two postings from APHIS involve a supplemental environmental impact statement (dated May 25, 2007) and WPM treatment modification (dated June 1, 2007). Comments on the former will be accepted through June 25, 2007 and comments on the latter will be accepted through July 31, 2007 (this is, in fact, an interim rule in effect as of June 1, 2007). The EPA action is simply that Agencies action to bring its regulations in line with the new MB fumigation schedule specified in ISPM No.

15. A comparison of the old schedule and the new schedule can be viewed at:

<http://ahc.caf.wvu.edu/wpm/Fumigation/revfumsched.pdf>.

## Next Steps

The Report of the Fourth Meeting IFQRG Meeting mentioned at the beginning of this newsletter ends with a list of “Next Steps” and dates, essentially action steps which can be viewed in the table on the following page. Given most dates are past due, there is a large amount of information pending which may have a direct impact on all wood packaging manufacturers.

The entire report of the IFQRG Fourth Meeting can be found at:

[http://www.forestry-quarantine.org/Oct06/CFIA\\_ACIA-IFQRG\\_Meeting\\_Report\\_Official.pdf](http://www.forestry-quarantine.org/Oct06/CFIA_ACIA-IFQRG_Meeting_Report_Official.pdf).

### IFQRG “Next Steps”

Action	Date
Develop a summary of information on bark suitability over time in relation to infestation after treatment	November 15, 2006
Develop protocols for microwave and radio frequencies and fumigation to standardize approaches to efficacy testing	March 1, 2007
Develop a technical summary of the efficacy of microwaves for inclusion in ISPM No. 15 in accordance with the proposed ISPM for the submission of treatments	January 31, 2007
Develop a technical summary of the efficacy of sulfuryl fluoride in accordance with the proposed ISPM for the submission of treatments	January 31, 2007
Determine and report back to IFQRG, if further specifications are necessary for methyl bromide treatment in ISPM No. 15 based on information supplied by Australia	By next IFQRG meeting
Produce a document outlining scientific knowledge on the size of bark required for pests to complete their lifecycle, which will help in identifying the risks from bark	January 31, 2007
Consider the need to draft practical guidelines on best practices for ISPM No. 15 treatments (efficacy, human health and safety, and environmental considerations)	March 1, 2007
Produce a bibliography of references and some explanatory text on the efficacy of fumigation	Next IFQRG meeting
Produce a bibliography of references and some explanatory text on the efficacy of heat treatment	March 1, 2007
(IFQRG) Group to consider and develop processes for finding enabling funding for participation of more developing countries	March 1, 2007
Provide to the IPPC-TPFQ information on the support for standardized marking and any information on applying marks to wood of varying sizes (including very small pieces of wood)	March 1, 2007
Draft a white paper on the biological characteristics that make certain organisms more aggressive for movement on the plants for planting pathway and establishment in new areas	March 1, 2007
Develop a protocol for testing to determine how many of the pests detected on marked wood packaging are present due to treatment failure versus infestation after treatment	March 1, 2007
Produce an explanatory document on heat treatment, including how to build a heat treatment facility and how to oversee and manage it	March 1, 2007