



PO Box 6125  
Morgantown, WV 26506  
304.293.7550  
ahc.caf.wvu.edu

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## Phytosanitation of Wood Packaging Material Newsletter

### Changes to US/Canada Bilateral WPM Agreement

The United States, Canada, and Mexico, under the auspices of the North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO), had carried out a Phased Compliance process for Wood Packaging Material (WPM), beginning September 16, 2005 and continuing through July 5, 2006. A bilateral agreement between the US and Canada allowed for free movement of any WPM between the two countries as long as the WPM fully originated in the US or Canada. Treatment of WPM as per ISPM 15 standards were and are required for movement between the US and Mexico.

Recent concern over the emerald ash borer (EAB) has led to the possibility of mandatory treatment of all WPM moving between the US and Canada. Possible changes to this agreement are likely being driven by concern in the US over the spread of the EAB. The Canadian WPM industry is apparently not endorsing any change, however. A quote in the Pallet Profile Weekly (02/01/08) from Gordon R. Hughes, Executive General Manager, Canadian Wood Pallet and Container Association (CWPCA) is as follows:

“The CWPCA Board of Directors is in opposition to the USDA/APHIS nullifying the bilateral agreement now in affect between Canada and the USA. The association fully supports ISPM No. 15 which does reduce the spread of quarantined pests but is troubled that the selective implementation of cross-border ISPM No. 15 for wood packaging may have an adverse affect on North American trade.”

Nevertheless, the US, through USDA APHIS Forest Products Trade Director, has issued the following proposal for WPM moving between the US and Canada:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture – Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and Canada Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) have determined the ISPM 15 wood packaging exemption between the two countries has become disadvantageous to controlling the introduction and spread of invasive species.

The growing number of invasive species establishing in the two countries mandates the removal of the ISPM No. 15 exemption to further insure the safety of our groves, orchards, forests and nurseries. The USDA and CFIA are developing an action plan which involves a 2 year phase-in period. The three phases of implementation will take part in four steps:

1. One year for industry preparations to comply with the standard.
2. Phase 1: Six months of informed compliance. Notices will be posted in connection with cargo that contains noncompliant WPM.
3. Phase 2: Six months of rejection of violative noncompliant wood crates and wood pallets through re-exportation. Informed compliance and notices posted in cargo with other types of noncompliant WPM (dunnage, blocking and bracing).
4. Phase 3: Full Enforcement on all articles of regulated WPM entering United States of America and North America. Shipments containing noncompliant regulated WPM will not be allowed to enter United States of America.

An official start date will be announced after further discussions with CFIA, Customs and Border Protection and Canada Border Services Agency.

## Domestic Treatment of WPM

A section of APHIS named the Emergency Domestic Programs (EDP) is specifically addressing problems related to the spread of invasive species within the US. According to a phone conversation (03/27/08) with APHIS Export Specialist John T. Jones, mandatory phytosanitation treatment of all WPM used for inter- and intra-state shipping is being considered.

## Emerald Ash Borer Information

Concern over stopping the spread of the emerald ash borer (EAB) has led to the possibility of mandatory phytosanitary treatment of all WPM. The ISPM 15 heat treatment standard of 56° C/30 minutes may not be sufficient to destroy these pests. A recent publication investigated the techniques of grinding, chipping, and heating to destroy the EAB. The Journal of Economic Entomology manuscript, "Effects of Chipping, Grinding, and Heat on Survival of Emer-

ald Ash Borer, *Agrilus planipennis* (Coleoptera: Buprestidae), in Chips", by Deborah G. McCullough, et al. can be accessed through the AHC website by following the links, "Wood Packaging Materials", then "News", then "New Rules on the Way".

## Country Updates

Taiwan, based on notification to the World Trade Organization (WTO), document numbers 07-5622 and 08-0023 dated 17 December 2007 and 4 January 2008 respectively, will follow ISPM 15 WPM guidelines. Previous phytosanitation regulations have been applied to logs and lumber but not WPM. Based on a communication from the Bureau of Animal and Plant Health Inspection and Quarantine of Taiwan, notification of a specific enforcement date will be made to the WTO before July 2008.

## Results from Latest IFQRG Meeting

The International Forestry Quarantine Research Group was established to provide a mechanism where critical forestry quarantine issues can be addressed through discussion and collaborative research. It serves to bring together scientists and phytosanitary officials to foster multi-disciplinary approaches to forest quarantine-related problems of global significance.

The results of a meeting held September 10-14, 2007, are now available at the IFQRG website. Twenty eight documents are available for review on a variety of topics. A short synopsis follows of issues with the potential for impact in the near term.

### Bark Audit/Surveys

By way of explanation of the standard setting process, the Technical Panel on Forest Quarantine (TPFQ) deals with technical matters regarding forest quarantine. Under the guidance of the Standards

Committee and through Specification for Technical Panels No. 4 (Rev. 1) the TPFQ reviews relevant technical and scientific information to provide recommendations to the Standard Committee on development, amendment, and revision of standards related to forest quarantine issues. This panel, in turn, delegated the job of WPM bark data collection/analysis to the IFQRG. The TPFQ had produced a recommendation that "Pieces of bark should be less than 3cm in width, or if wider than 3cm, the total surface area of each bark piece should be less than 50 sq. cm." The IFQRG undertook the bark audits to determine the feasibility of this recommendation with the final result of this bark review as follows:

"IFQRG, having considered the data from a number of monitoring exercises and scientific evaluations, supports the TPFQ proposal that pieces of bark should be less than 3cm in width, or if wider than 3cm, the total surface area of each bark piece should be less than 50 sq. cm. It notes that this recommendation will significantly reduce the risk from pests associated with bark on wood packaging material marked in accordance with ISPM No 15 in a way that should not have an unfavorable impact on trade."

### Repaired/Remanufactured WPM

The current proposal of the TPFQ is that National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) have responsibility for confirming that marked repaired/remanufactured WPM consists entirely of properly treated wood. While members of IFQRG reviewed significant information on the subject, no conclusions regarding specific phytosanitary risks were reached. A concern was raised as to repair facilities creating a greater potential for mixing of treated and untreated wood, as well as some members noting that the repair/remanufacture industry may operate in an area which is difficult to regulate. In the US the current rule is that any ISPM 15 marked WPM undergoing repair/remanufacture must have the existing marks obliterated with final product being retreated and remarked.

### Thermo-Tolerant Pests

A current concern, especially in the US and Canada, is the emerald ash borer (EAB). Preliminary findings indicate that the EAB has significant survival

rates when heat treated to the ISPM 15 standard of 56° C for thirty minutes. A presentation on the subject pointed out that the standard specifies 56° C for thirty minutes at the core of the wood and that the exterior portions of the WPM, where the EAB may exist, are exposed to 56° C or higher for longer than thirty minutes. Another consideration in this area was voiced with respect to the possibility of dielectric heating being introduced as an alternative treatment. In this type of treatment the profile of the heat across the WPM would be 56° C, possibly for less than thirty minutes, rendering the kiln models inappropriate.

### Other Pests

The genus *Ips* was a topic of concern. These are bark beetles found throughout the US especially in the East but also in the Midwest. The concern for WPM is that several species of this beetle genus are common pests on several North American pine species. A presentation on the subject of interceptions of this bark beetle concluded that this genus could yield a significant invasive species. Yet, it is not a particularly common genus to become established in new areas, although it is a commonly intercepted pest on WPM.

Also of concern are sudden oak death (SOD) and the risks associated with the cause, *Phytophthora ramorum* (a plant pathogen similar to fungi). A conclusion drawn from discussions on this topic was that conifer wood poses low risk for the movement of this pathogen although it was pointed out that evidence exists that it may be transported in xylem tissue of beech, maple, and oak.

### ISPM 15 Alternative Treatment Development

ISPM 28, "Phytosanitary Treatments for Regulated Pests (2007)", is an overarching standard for promulgating and approving any new phytosanitary treatments for any and all commodities. It specifies that data and other information on efficacy, feasibility, and applicability of treatments be submitted by the representative NPPO or Regional Plant Protection Organization (RPPO) to the Technical Panel on Phytosanitary Treatment (TPPT). If the treatment is found to be acceptable it will be recommended to



that dielectric heating as well as radio frequency heating appear to be sufficient to meet the 56° C heat treatment requirement. A subsequent question to be answered relative to these latter treatments is if a 30 minute period at this temperature would be required, as well.

This portion of the meeting resulted in the creation of three Working Group Reports, the specifics of which can be found in the Appendix to the report located on the IFQRG website. The working groups were created to look more fully into the subject of alternative treatments from the perspective of insect response, fungal response, and nematode response, the three broad areas of concern related specifically to WPM.

## More WPM Information

More information on WPM subjects can be found at the Appalachian Hardwood Center (AHC) website (<http://www.ahc.caf.wvu.edu/>) by clicking on the Wood Packaging Material link. You can also call Jeff Slahor at (304) 203 7550 ext. 2461 with any questions. This site is maintained as a co-operative project between the AHC and the Wood Education Resource Center (WERC).

