PALLET PHYTOSANITARY PROJECT NEWSLETTER

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

Number 8 March 2004

REGULATORY UPDATE

Alternative Treatments Under ISPM 15

An ongoing question among those involved in wood packaging material in international trade concerns the process for gaining approval of alternative treatment options. At this time there is no set protocol for advancing treatment alternatives for consideration as acceptable alternatives to heat treatment and methyl bromide fumigation.

ISPM 15 "Guidelines For Regulating Wood Packaging Material In International Trade", under Section 3.2 "Measures Pending Approval" makes reference to this issue. The specific language states, "Other treatments or processes for wood packaging material will be approved when it can be demonstrated that they provide an appropriate level of phytosanitary protection".

The International Forestry Quarantine Research Group (IFQRG) is the lead organization in developing the protocols necessary to demonstrate the efficacy of alternative treatments and to obtain acceptance as a phytosanitary treatment. The mission statement of the IFQRG is 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. At this time IFQRG is the only entity involved in the evaluation of protocols for alternative treatments.

Dr. Eric Allen of the Canadian Forest Service – Natural Resources Canada is the volunteer chair of IFQRG and serves on a committee with Mr. Doug Walsh (Biosecurity Australia) and Dr. Hugh Evans (UK Forestry Commission) developing criteria for submitting and evaluating proposals for treatments to be included in ISPM 15. The initial meeting of the research group was held in Rome, Italy, February 17 – 19, 2004. Prior to the meeting, no specific criteria had been developed to guide the development of alternative treatments. Twenty-seven individuals participated in the meeting, representing Australia, Canada, Chile, China, Germany, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, UK, USA, EPPO, and FAO. The United States was represented by officials from USDA, including APHIS and the USFS Forest Products Lab.

Expert subcommittees were formed to address specific treatments to deal with more focused issues surrounding both existing and alternative treatment methods. A list of these subcommittees and the home country of the committee chair follows:

Review of Approved Measures

- Heat Treatment (UK)
- Methyl Bromide (US)

Review of Proposed Measures, New Technologies, and Information

- Developing Criteria For Submitting and Evaluating Proposals for Treatments to be Included in ISPM 15 (Australia)
- Chemical Impregnation (UK)
- Radiation, Microwave (Germany)
- Fumigation and Modified Atmosphere (US)
- Global Interception Database and Information Sharing (Canada)
- Bark Infestation Experiment (Canada)

Standard Interpretation

- ISPM 15 Interpretation and Implementation (UK)

A tentative timetable envisions a set of criteria by the end of 2004. Questions about the subcommittees and their activities should be directed to Dr. Eric Allen via email at eallen@pfc.cfs.nrcan.gc.ca.

As the IFQRG moves the process forward, developments and updates will be reported in future newsletters. Information and updates from the IFQRG can be accessed at their website:

www.forestry-quarantine.org.

Problems in International Shipments Using Wood Packaging Material (WPM)

An array of problems continues to be identified by the project team and those involved in international trade using WPM. Some additional instances are discussed below:

Recently a couple of different pallet manufacturers in Pennsylvania had multiple tractor-trailer loads of pallets rejected due to severe structural degrade. The pallets were constructed from green red oak parts and were heat treated in chambers operating at or near 200 degrees Fahrenheit. Apparently, the combination of high temperature and the time necessary to heat the core of individual pieces to 133 degrees Fahrenheit for 30 minutes resulted in honeycombing and/or collapse. The pallet manufacturers contacted Penn State Extension about this situation and to seek assistance. As a result, Penn State will be sponsoring a workshop in the near future that will focus on covering the basics of wood technology, wood and water relations, how to sterilize wood packaging material with minimal degrade, and how to choose and operate heat treating equipment that will meet their needs. As the workshop specifics become available they will be included in upcoming newsletters.

GRANTS PROGRAM

As part of the overall grants program sponsored by the Pallet Phytosanitary Project, two projects have been funded to meet specific needs of the WPM industry. The first of these was detailed in Newsletter No. 7 and the second is discussed below:

Title: Development and Assessment of Educational Materials
Organization: Auburn Enterprises, LLC. Auburn, Maine.
Project Leader: Thom Labrie

This project is designed to develop an educational/informational tool using CD or DVD and video technologies. The primary focus of the tool will be to present technical information covering the equipment and systems available for heat-treating wood packaging material and products.

It will contain presentations of comparable technical data and sales materials from all of the manufacturers of pallet heat-treating equipment wanting to participate in the project. The specific objectives are:

- Provide comparative information detailing equipment, supplies, and specification needed by wood packaging manufacturers to successfully implement heat treatment options.
- Develop and demonstrate educational programming employing advanced instructional development methods and distance learning technologies.
- Develop a fuller understanding of the development process utilized in creating the educational media.
- Assess the acceptance of the technology and value of information provided.
- Evaluate the potential cost effectiveness of educational media development.

The final educational product will provide viewers with a user-friendly format for comparing all of the available heat-treating technologies to assist them in making well-informed decisions on which products would best fit their specific heat treatment needs.

ONGOING 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 continue compiling these issues and any solution you have developed and share them with your colleagues and the industry through this newsletter. We would much 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 continue to share it in future newsletters.

HEAT STERILIZATION PUBLICATION

The Pallet Phytosanitary Project recently published a Technical Paper authored by Joseph Denig and Brian Bond, entitled "Heat Sterilization of Hardwood Pallets and Pallet Material". Copies of the publication are available by contacting the Project Manager at (304) 282-5417 or via email at **curth@mail.wvnet.edu**.

VIDEOS STILL AVAILABLE

An earlier newsletter publicized the availability of two videos related to wood packaging phytosanitary issues. 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) cooperated in the development of these videos. The first tape 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. After a number of orders from the first notice, a limited number of copies are still available free on a first-come-first-served basis. A modest shipping charge may be required. Requests should be directed to Rob Rizzo at:

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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.