



Ship Type: Dry Cargo Trade Area: Worldwide/Europe

Bulletin xxx - 10/01 – Coniferous Wood Packing

The Commission of the European Communities has adopted emergency measures requiring the treatment and marking of all new and used coniferous (e.g. pine, spruce, fir) non-manufactured wood packing material (NMWP) originating in the United States, Canada, China, or Japan and departing on or after 1st October 2001, to prevent the introduction of the pinewood nematode. The pinewood nematode is a microscopic worm, which has caused extensive mortality in pines in Japan and China. Hardwoods are exempt from the EU emergency measure.

Since NMWP made entirely of hardwoods are exempt from the EU emergency measure, no marking of this material is required. The National Wooden Pallet and Container Association (NWPCA), the largest organisation of wooden packaging professionals in North America is developing an optional mark for "hardwood only" NMWP.

European concern over the possible introduction and establishment of the pinewood nematode has heightened over the past couple of years after an outbreak in Portugal and interceptions of the pinewood nematode in NMWP from the United States, Canada, China, and Japan. The source of the outbreak in Portugal has not been positively identified but packaging material is considered to be the most likely.

The EU emergency measures allow three treatment options for coniferous NMWP - heat treatment (HT), fumigation or chemical pressure impregnation (CPI). In all cases, treated wood must bear a mark indicating the organisation that treated the NMWP and the location of that organisation. The EU requires that the HT program be an official program with official marks.

All three of the treatment options approved by the European Union are available to exporters in the United States. The US Dept. of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) recommends the use of the heat-treatment (HT) option.

NMWP Made with CPI Wood

Environmental concerns surrounding pressure-impregnated wood make its large-scale use problematic. For instance, the Netherlands has recently prohibited the commercial importation of wood impregnated with copper compounds because of environmental issues. In spite of this, the EU emergency measures do not require a specific chemical treatment or an official mark for NMWP made with CPI coniferous wood. The European Union does not require treatment of non-coniferous wood so NMWP may be made of untreated non-coniferous wood and CPI coniferous wood. In most cases, CPI wood contains quality marks and is a distinct colour (due to the treatment process) so it cannot be mistaken for untreated wood.

For more information:

A list of frequently asked questions for NMWP going to the European Union has been prepared:

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/swp/eunmwpfaqs.html>

Or e-mail your questions to nmwp@aphis.usda.gov.

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