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Phytosanitation of Wood Packaging Material Bulletin

European Union Finalizes WPM Debarked Rule Background

The EU began implementation and enforcement of ISPM-15 on March 1, 2005 with an additional debarking requirement for WPM, but postponed enforcing the debarking requirement to March 1, 2006. Prior to the March 1, 2006 deadline, the EU Standing Committee on Plant Health, on January 1, 2006, voted to delay implementation of the debarking requirement until January 1, 2009. The delay was published as Council Directive 2005/15/EC in Official Journal L 56. A progress review of the directive was expected to commence by September 2007. The intent of the delay was to allow the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) time to evaluate the merits of a debarking requirement.

In response to these concerns, the International Forestry Quarantine Research Group (IFQRG) prepared a draft ISPM debarking standard. The draft was distributed in May 2006 for country consultation and comment. Subsequent to the release of the draft standard, IFQRG acknowledged that there were a number of areas where definitive answers were not available about the impact of bark on

WPM. Existing bark on otherwise properly treated WPM was seen as a critical factor in determining if pests on/in the WPM are the result of treatment failure or infestation after treatment. In order to better understand the level of bark on WPM, a survey was designed and sent out with a request for all National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPO) to participate. Completed Surveys were accepted through May 31, 2007. A summary of the survey results was presented in the AHC-Phytosanitation of WPM Newsletter in December 2007.

The bark issue (bark free/debarked), which had begun as a draft stand-alone standard was subsequently altered during the September 2007 IFQRG meeting. It was decided to keep only the bark definitions in the Glossary of Phytosanitary Terms (ISPM 5). The pertinent definitions in ISPM 5 are:

bark-free wood — wood from which all bark excluding the vascular cambium, ingrown bark around knots, and bark pockets between rings of annual growth has been removed [ISPM No. 15, 2002]

and:

debarking — removal of bark from round wood (debarking does not necessarily make the wood bark-free) [FAO, 1990]

As far as the rest of the proposed bark standard, it would be covered in the Revision of ISPM No. 15 (in the form of a bark tolerance), based on a technical panel review of the data from the previously mentioned survey. According to a communication with an APHIS representative to the September 2008 IFQRG meeting, the most current revision of ISPM 15 will be circulated later this month (January 2009) for abbreviated review and will likely be adopted during the meeting of the IPPC Commission on Phytosanitary Measures in April 2009.

European Union Actions

On November 29, 2008, the European Union published its Commission Directive 2008/109/EC that limits the presence of bark for all wood packaging material used for importing goods and materials into the EU. The publication can be found in the Official Journal of the European Union (<http://www.bfah.de/inst4/45/pdf/2008109.pdf>). Section 5 of this directive states that in order to protect the territory of the Community (EU) from the introduction of harmful organisms the Community requirements for the presence of bark on wood packaging material and dunnage should be brought in line with the technical conclusions drawn by the IFQRG technical panel without waiting for the adoption of a revised ISPM No 15 by the IPPC Commission on Phytosanitary Measures. Further, Section 8 states “The requirement that wood packaging material be made from debarked round wood introduced by Commission Directive 2006/14/EC (3) amending Annex IV to Directive 2000/29/EC will apply from 1 January 2009. It is therefore necessary that the measures provided for in this Directive also apply from 1 January 2009. However, in order to allow third countries to make the necessary adaptations it is appropriate to provide that the bark requirement should apply as from 1 July 2009.”

The specific language of the EU Directive mirrors the IFQRG technical panel recommendation and reads as follows:

The wood packaging material (applied also to wood used to wedge or support non-wood cargo, including that which has not kept its natural round surface) shall be free from bark with the exception

of any number of individual pieces of bark if they are either less than 3 cm in width (regardless of the length) or, if greater than 3 cm in width, of not more than 50 cm² in area.

New ALB Quarantine Area

A federal order dated 01/10/2009 and effective immediately, specifies an expansion of the boundaries of a quarantined portion of Worcester County, Massachusetts, for Asian longhorned beetle (ALB). This action is in response to a confirmed detection of ALB in this area of Massachusetts. On September 4, 2008, APHIS issued a Federal Order (DA-2008-59) to add a portion of Worcester County to the ALB quarantined areas. On November 10, 2008, a second Federal Order (DA-2008-72) was issued to expand the quarantine areas in Massachusetts. Other States and areas of the country are also quarantined for ALB. These include areas of Queens, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Staten Island, and Long Island, New York, and portions of Middlesex and Union Counties, New Jersey. The existing boundaries for the quarantines in New York and New Jersey can be found in 7 CFR 301.51.

More Information

If you have questions about this change in bark requirements for WPM entering the European Union, please feel free to call (304.293.7550 ext. 2461) or email (jslahor@wvu.edu) the Appalachian Hardwood Center.

