



# Softwood Export Council Newsletter

October 2007

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## SEC in NAWLA Traders Market

Softwood Export Council will exhibit in NAWLA Trades Market in November 2007.

SEC members don't forget to stop by at SEC booth in 2007 NAWLA Traders Market. Portland and Mexican staff members, Hande, Fernanda, and Roberto, will be on hand to answer questions on international markets and the use of the ACP (Association-Company-Participation) travel program.

The show, open to wholesale and producing members of NAWLA, will take place in November 16-17 2007 in Hilton Anatole Hotel at Trinity Hall 1 , Dallas, TX

## CINTRAFOR Publications

The Center for International Trade in Forest Products has released a number of new research reports on US softwood products and markets.

[Working Paper 107 "China Treated Lumber Market Study"](#) provides an overview and background on the current market and acceptance for US treated softwoods.

[Working Paper 106 "The Market for Softwood Lumber in Japan. Opportunities for Douglas-fir Structural Lumber for Hirakaku"](#) is a detailed study in the Japanese acceptance for US softwood species and specific uses.

[Working Paper 105 "Overview of the Indian market for US Wood Products"](#) is an in depth look at a future market of US softwoods.

[Working Paper 102 "Distribution systems for value-added wood products in China"](#) provides insights into the sometimes opaque Chinese sales and distribution system

Hard copies of these publications can be purchased from CINTRAFOR for the reproductive costs of \$50. For more information <http://www.cintrafor.org/>

## Fall China Interior Seminars

The Softwood Export Council recently completed a series of design and wood information seminars in three major cities in China; Xiamen, Hangzhou and Chengdu.

The seminars were attended by Chinese architects, designer, distributors and local associations. The total number of attendees was reached up to 310 during the week long seminars series. In Xiamen, the participation to the seminars had reached over 180 attendees who were local architects, furniture association and designers. According the attendees, these seminars are much need to educate Chinese architects and designers. The local designers also underlined the interest of Chinese designers to use pioneering products.

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For these series of seminars, Softwood Export Council invited Taiwanese architect and designer, Jesse Yang to present his recent projects. Mr. Yang is a well known architect for his innovative designs in Taiwan. In his presentations he pointed out his projects using American softwoods and applications. His presentations were followed by questions from audience.

The attendees had various questions about American softwoods and design. The main questions were about the species and application differences although fire resistance and building codes were the other main concerning questions of the Chinese designers.

After the two successful interior seminars series in 2007 in China, Softwood Export Council will continue to conduct seminars throughout China. In 2007, the total number of seminar participation was over 650 attendees who are coming from different part of the industry. The American softwood lumber exports to China already reached \$19 million since the beginning of the 2007 which is 65% increase comparing the first 6 months of the 2006. The Chinese market continues to import Cedar, Ponderosa pine, Hemlock and Southern Yellow Pine.

SEC member companies, participating these seminars, allows U.S. companies to meet local companies and market their products. Join SEC for upcoming seminars in China and other markets in the winter and spring of 2008.

## Northern European Summer 07 market report

*by Eddie Pearce:*

A few markets across Europe have shown a slight slowdown whilst others have continued with improvement in the imports of American softwoods.

House building in the UK continues to increase. Imports of constructional grade timber, particularly S-P-F, has continued to grow to levels which have not been seen in the past 10 years. So far total exports to the UK for the period up to May 2007, over 78,000m<sup>3</sup> have been exported.

Timber decking in the UK continues to grow and the forecast by the Timber Decking Association is that this market is likely to increase by about 10-15% in 2007.

During the period June 12 - 17, 2007, American Softwoods participated at Gardener's World Live 2007 at the NEC, Birmingham, UK. The purpose of participating at this show was to promote timber decking. It proved to be very successful, with a high level of visitors coming to the booth and over 20 good contacts being made.

In Germany, the demand for wood windows continues to grow. This is a confirmation that the German building industry continues to improve. At present the most favoured species for window manufacture are European pine and Meranti. The building industry in France is also continuing to improve, however the demand for US timber has slowed.

## Japan Office highlights

*By Tomoko Igarashi*

## Program Briefs

The staff of American Softwoods Japan Office had continuously prepared for the upcoming fall trade shows including Total Japan Gardening Show 2007 held from October 3 - 4, 2007 in Tokyo, Osaka Home Expo 2007 held from October 25 - 27, 2007 in Osaka, and Japan Home and Building Show 2007 held from November 14 - 16, 2007 in Tokyo.

The office relocation with AF&PA Tokyo Office on August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2007 has been completed and we prepared for packing, unpacking, the new office notice, invoice related to the moving.

For the advertisements, we created the text and draft design for SEC and APA respectively.

## Market Briefs

According to MLIT, housing starts in July 2007 were 81,714 -unit. It seriously decreased 23.4% compared to the rate of July 2006. One of reason for this lower rate is the confusions of Japanese housing industry due to the revised Japanese building standard code held in June, 2007. Even if the number of the previous month June housing starts was the highest in the year of 2007. The annualized figure after seasonal adjustments in July was 947,000-unit. The rate which fallen below 1,000,000-unit was since 1966.

The wooden house ratio was 46.0% ( 37,609-unit ) in July 2007. The number of housing starts by Post and Beam system was 39,543-unit minus 22.6% down compared to July 2006. Plat form system (2x4) was 6,802-unit which 22.0% down compared to the year of July 2006. MLIT assumed that this rate was temporary to adjust the revised Japanese building standard code for the check system of earthquake proof

## China ZOW

American Softwoods and SEC staff, and members of MITC, PLEA and WWPA provided the technical, marketing and procurement knowledge at this year's ZOW show in Shanghai. The ZOW trade show for furniture production suppliers was part of the much much larger China Furniture Exhibition been held. This show is fast approaching in size the Interzum show held in Germany.

Most of the contacts were simply interested in learning about US softwood species and their uses for the furniture and interiors applications. Many others however, were looking for new sources of supply as world wood prices continue to shift and the US dollar continues to devalue. There was high interest in western softwood speices such as Ponderosa pine, Western Hemlock, and Douglas fir. A full contact list will be available shortly from the American Softwoods office in Shanghai.



## CE markings

*From TRADA Information Sheet #56 - May 2007*

## The legal basis

In 1985 a "New Approach to technical harmonisation" was introduced through the European Commission (EC) resolution 85/C136/01. Under this resolution a list of

"New Approach Directives" was formulated for a number of product family headings. One of these was the Construction Products Directive (CPD) (currently under review). Others cover a wide range of products including electrical goods, the safety of children's toys, packaging and packaging waste etc.

The CPD was transposed into UK law as the Construction Products Regulations 1991 and the subsequent Construction Products (Amendment) Regulations 1994 (CPR). The CPD differs from other Directives, such as those covering machinery or toys, in that it applies technical specifications to the finished works into which construction products are to be used, rather than directly to the products themselves. This is because construction products on their own have no implication for general safety and well being. It is only when they are incorporated into works that their performance becomes important.

The CPD sets out six Essential Requirements with which all structures subject to regulation must comply:

- Mechanical resistance and stability
- Hygiene, health and environment
- Protection against noise retention.
- Safety in case of fire
- Safety in use
- Energy, economy and heat retention.

In 1988, the European Commission (EC) asked the European Committee for Standardisation (CEN) to prepare families of standards that defined requirements to determine the suitability of construction products for use under the CPD. These new European Standards reference test methods, product and performance specifications and factory production control requirements. For each product type these are all brought together in a single document known as a 'Harmonised Standard'.

Once a Harmonised Standard is published, all products covered by that standard sold for permanent use in construction works (building, civil engineering, highways etc), anywhere in the EU, must comply with the CPD. In all member states, apart from the UK, Ireland and Sweden, the only way to show compliance is by applying the CE mark. Whilst the three 'opt out' countries have said that applying the CE mark is not mandatory, compliance with the CPD is. It is important to understand, however, that the CE mark (from the French, 'Conformité Européen') is intended to promote the free movement of products within the EU by showing that essential health and safety requirements have been met. It is not a Statement of quality; it is simply 'a fitness for purpose' mark which allows the inspecting authority to remove unsafe products from the market when appropriate cases are reported to them.

## Timber products: CE marking

For timber products, the first Harmonised Standard to be published was

*EN 13986: 2002 Wood-based panels for use in construction - Characteristics, evaluation of conformity and marking, now superseded by EN 13986: 2004.*

The following products can also be CE marked via harmonised standards:

- Roof trusses made with punched metal plate fasteners: *EN 14250*
- Wood flooring: *EN 14342*
- Structural laminated veneer lumber (LVL): *EN 14374*.
- Strength graded structural timber: *EN 14081-1* - until 01/09/2007
- Solid wood panelling and cladding: *EN 14915* - until 10/06/2008
- Glued laminated timber: *EN 14080* - co-existence period until 01/04/2009.

Harmonised Standards for other timber products are in preparation including:

- Pedestrian doors and windows
- Wood poles for overhead lines
- Structural timber with round cross section
- Prefabricated wall, floor and roof elements
- Finger jointed structural timber
- Timber connectors
- Non-fire internal doors
- Fire doors.

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

*Softwood Export Council- Promoting the expansion of export markets for primary and secondary softwood products manufactured in the United States.*

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