



## Half of China urban-ites own homes

*From: Chinaonline.com*

China's State Statistical Bureau recently conducted a large-scale survey on the housing conditions of city-dwellers, the April 5 Shenghuo Shibao (Life Times) reported.

The results show 56% of families possess houses of their own, worth on average RMB 26,000 (US\$3,144). This sum is 1.5 times the average annual income. 87% of home-owning families purchased government-built apartments that used to be State-funded welfare facilities. Another 10% purchased commercial houses, and the remaining 3% purchased other types of houses.

Among the home-owning families, 4% purchased their house before 1990, 19% between 1991 and 1994, 32% between 1994 and 1996, and 44% between 1997 and 1999. This shows the greater the momentum for housing reform, the greater the desire for homeownership.

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## Euro storms may affect exports

*by Eddie Pearce*

The SEC European representative recently returned from a swing through NW France. The hot topic of discussion was the Christmas – New Year storms that hit France during December 1999. Estimates on the volume of timber damage that was caused, ranging from 65 million m<sup>3</sup> to 85 million m<sup>3</sup>. All contacts agreed that the timber market will be affected, both for softwoods and hardwoods.

One region affected by the storms was Les Landes, a pine-producing region that stretches from La Rochelle down to Biarritz along the French west coast. Another region was the Les Vosges area where significant damage was done to Douglas Fir forests. The volume of timber salvaged from the storm damage may affect supply for 2 years.

Storm damaged Pine is being offered at very competitive rates putting imported U.S. Southern Pine at a disadvantage. The situation for Douglas fir is not so clear. While there has been significant storm damage, the demand for imported Douglas fir will continue because of healthy economy in France and in particular in Northeast France/Southeast Belgium, a traditional user of structural Douglas fir timbers.

With the healthy French economy, exports of US softwoods are likely to continue, albeit at slower rate than was achieved during 1999. US species that will continue to grow are Douglas fir and Western Hemlock, the latter being used in the door industry.

To see the complete report, as well as a list of trade contacts, access [www.softwood.org](http://www.softwood.org)

## Brazilian requirements met for SWPM

Effective April 14, 2000, the US was removed from the list of countries required to comply with Brazil's new regulations for imported solid wood packing material (SWPM). This means Brazil no longer requires U.S.-origin SWPM to be fumigated in the US by a private company and endorsed by USDA-APHIS with a phytosanitary certificate before it is exported to Brazil

Brazilian agricultural officials have

notified inspectors and shipments from the US should no longer be subject to removal or replacement of the SWPM.

The US was removed from the list after APHIS assured Brazilian agricultural officials that the Asian longhorned beetle has a limited distribution in the US, affecting only metropolitan Chicago and metropolitan New York/Long Island. The pest is native to east Asia.

## Markets

May 2000

### Japan structural material trends

*The rapid growth of KD DF beam and Alaska yellow cedar sill*

A recent survey made by the *Japan Lumbers Reports* with 57 wood based house builders regarding what materials are being used for main structural members of house construction disclosed that laminated lumber for posts is growing fast and dominating with 66% of total usage, 5% higher than the last survey made in 1998.

For structural beam use, Douglas Fir KD lumber has a 38% share, 11% higher than the last survey and European whitewood laminated lumber is up by 4% with 13% market share. It is interesting to note that Douglas Fir laminated lumber declined while European whitewood laminated lumber gained.

There are many more changes in sill lumber. Hemlock continues to be dominant but the share dropped by 18% since 1998 while Alaska yellow

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### Japan imported materials survey

*By USFCS Osaka Office*

A recent survey of builders and architects conducted by the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) Housing Materials Center in Osaka showed that consumer demand is a key factor in builders' decisions to use imported building materials. The most common reason given for using imported materials was "client demand," indicating new homebuyers' continuing affinity for American and other imported housing.

Well over one-third of builders questioned replied that they had used imported materials in traditional post and beam housing, and more than 20% had used imported products on remodeling jobs. Builders noted that shorter delivery

times, better after-sales service, Japanese language catalogs and installation manuals would mean better sales for overseas suppliers.

The survey results indicate that Japanese home owners as well as home builders are interested in imported building materials and that the United States is the largest supplier of those materials. In addition to the strong interest in U.S. residential building products, the Japanese housing market seemed to hit bottom in early 1999 and will likely continue to recover slowly but steadily in 2000.

The complete report from US F&CS and JETRO is available on the SEC web site or on the USDoC Japan web site.

### American softwoods in the UK

An analysis of how American softwoods are handled and used in the UK was recently conducted with a questionnaire sent out to 681 timber merchants throughout the UK. 75 timber merchants replied and 50 noted that they were stocking American softwood species. The figures show that the number of timber merchants stocking American species has increased by 47% over the past 10 years. 34 of the merchants had been handling American softwoods for more than 10 years.

The companies represent a significant cross section of the timber merchants in the UK.

The stocking species breaks down to the following list:

- 80% Southern Pine
- 72% Douglas Fir
- 68% Western Red Cedar
- 36% Eastern White Pine
- 30% Western Hemlock
- 16% Hem-fir
- 12% Lodgepole Pine
- 10% Sitka Spruce
- 4% Ponderosa Pine
- 4% Alaskan Yellow Cedar
- 4% Eastern Red Pine
- 2% Cypress
- 2% Californian Redwood

American softwoods imported into the UK are used for a wide range of applications and end-uses, including

*(Continued on page 3)*

# Programs

May 2000

## SEC welcomes supporting members

The Softwood Export Council welcomes two new supporting members.

World Wide Wood Network, Ltd. is an e-commerce company set to provide transactional business services and industry information to the forest products industry. Their website address is [www.wwwood.net](http://www.wwwood.net).

The North Carolina Department of Agriculture, International Trade in Forest Products has also linked into the SEC. The NCDA provides information on softwoods producers in NC, export information, and trade leads. The SEC now becomes an additional source of international market research and information for its constituents.

Both members may be accessed from the SEC supporting member's web page. Welcome on board.

*(UK survey - Continued from page 2)*

Windows, Doors, Staircases,  
Ladders, Boat building,  
Exterior cladding,  
Musical instruments,  
Conservatories,  
General internal joinery, Furniture,  
Construction (Hem-fir)  
Decking, and Flooring

Stocking timber company information has been loaded onto the UK office database which is maintained for all countries in Europe. Contact the SEC UK office for further information and lists of selected importers. The full report can also be found on the SEC web site.

## FAS website receives update

The Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), Forest and Fishery Products Division (FFPD) website has received a complete update. The new homepage has direct links to many areas of interest to forest products exporters.

The FFPD website provides up to the minute trade data, a calendar of international trade shows and conferences, and current trade highlights. The site also links to Agricultural Attaché forest products reports, articles on international market opportunities, and the complete "*Guide to Exporting Solid Wood Products*".

Information links to marketing strategy sites, US industry cooperators (including the SEC), and FAS staff, are also part of the package. The site can be directly linked from [www.softwood.org](http://www.softwood.org)

*(Japan Timbers - Continued from page 2)*

cedar (cypress) lumber and laminated lumber have and expanded share. Obviously, the switch is being made to use more durable material like cypress and more environmentally friendly and safer treating chemicals.

The survey is also asked how builders process structural wood for housing. Pre-cutting is overwhelmingly high with a 77% share versus job site cutting and notching. The use of metal fittings is also increasing. It is estimated that use of the metal joint fittings is about 5% now but in near future, it is expected to grow to 20%.

## Trade Publications Available

The Center for International Trade in Forest Products (CINTRAFOR) periodically produces research reports and market studies on topics that are pertinent to U.S. forest product exporters. Some of these research studies are FAS joint activities with the SEC or its member organizations. Recent titles include:

- Changing Export Trends and the Health of the Pacific Northwest Forest Sector (Mar. 2000)
- Material Substitution Trends in Residential Construction, 1995 vs. 1998 (Feb. 2000)
- A Technical Assessment of the North American-Style 2x4 Residential Construction System in Japan (Oct. 1999)
- An Assessment of the South Korean Market for Value-Added Wood Products (Sept. 1999)
- An Assessment of the South Korean Market for Non-Structural Wood Products (Jul. 1999)

For information on ordering any of these publications, phone CINTRAFOR at 206-543-8684, or visit their web site at: [www.cintrafor.org](http://www.cintrafor.org)

# Events

May 2000

## SEC MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

American Institute of Timber Construction

California Redwood Association

Center for International Trade in Forest Products

Evergreen Building Products Association

North American Wholesale Lumber Association

Oregon Economic Development Department

OSU Forest Products Department

Pacific Lumber Exporters Association

Pacific Lumber Inspection Bureau

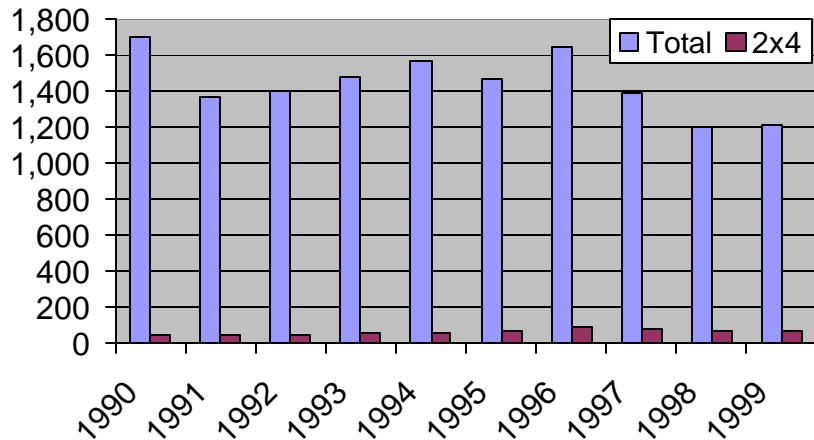
West Coast Lumber Inspection Bureau

Western Wood Preservers Institute

Western Wood Products Association

Wood Moulding and Millwork

( '000 units) **Japan Annual Housing Starts**



## Upcoming Events

-  Japanese Trade Delegation to Portland/Seattle May 7-13, 2000
- ◆ Interbuild 2000, Birmingham, UK - May 21-24, 2000
- ◆ Carrefour International du Bois, Nantes, France - May 24-26, 2000
- ◆ Japan Housing Conference/AWDA, Yokohama - June 6, 2000
- ◆ Gardeners' World Live, Birmingham, UK - June 14-18, 2000
-  NAWLA/OECDD/WWPA China Tour - June 18-24, 2000
-  European Wood Council, Luneburg, Germany - June 26-30, 2000
- ◆ ATMAC 2000 & Frame Australia, Melbourne, Australia - July 14-19,
-  PLIB/WCLIB/WWPA Australia Tour - July 16-22
- ◆ Imported Housing Materials Expo, Kobe, Japan - Sept. 28-30, 2000
- ◆ Japan Home Show, Tokyo, Japan - Nov. 14-17, 2000
- ◆ International Forest Products Marketing Conference, Seattle  
Nov. 14-17, 2000

Call SEC for more detailed information

New information on  
[www.softwood.org](http://www.softwood.org)

Annual Japan Report by  
Yami Yamiguchi

International Importers Lists  
(members only)

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[www.wwwood.net](http://www.wwwood.net)

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