

CHB -

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SURFACES -

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BUSINESS TRENDS  
(ABROAD)

China

According to the IHB Fordaq Network, China's Ministry of Commerce has released information on its Distribution Plan for Export Quotas of Sawnwood in 2010. Developed in response to the anticipated supply and demand situation in international markets, the plan paid special attention to export quotas for foreign enterprises operating in China.

The total export of sawnwood in 2010 is expected to be 212,000 cubic meters. As stated in the plan, six provinces among 29 are getting export quotas over 10,000 cubic meters each. Those provinces are the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region at 98,200 cubic meters; Dalian City, 17,100 cubic meters; Sichuan Province, 16,600 cubic meters; Heilongjiang Province, 16,000 cubic meters; Tianjin City, 14,700 cubic meters; and Jilin Province, 13,300 cubic meters. Commerce departments of each province are required to strictly follow the export plan and keep the Ministry of Commerce informed of progress.

In wood product trade news, China's log

imports totaled 28 million cubic meters, valued at US\$4,087 million in 2009, which is down 5 percent in volume and 21 percent in value from 2008. Softwood log imports were 20.30 million cubic meters of that total, valued at US\$2,233 million and hardwood log imports were at 7.76 million cubic meters, valued at US\$1,854 million.

Tropical log imports totaled 6.11 million cubic meters, (22 percent of the national total) down 15 percent from 2008. Main suppliers of logs to China in 2009 were: Russia (14.81 million cubic meters, 53 percent of total log imports), New Zealand (4.41 million cubic meters, 16 percent), Papua New Guinea (1.66 million cubic meters, 6 percent), Solomon Islands (1.12 million cubic meters, 4 percent) and Gabon (1.10 million cubic meters, 3.9 percent).

Valued at US\$298 million in 2009, China's imported furniture was up 5.0 percent in volume and down 4.6 percent in value from 2008. Other exports such as wooden doors, windows and flooring were down 6 percent from 2008 at US\$3,118 million.

Japan

According to the Japan Lumber Reports (JLR), the sentiment in the trade is that the tropical log market has seen the bottom of price declines and that an upward trend in prices is on the way. Japan's manufacturers were active in the log market and stocking up in advance of the Chinese New Year Holidays, which traditionally slows log harvesting and transportation, especially in Malaysia.

Prices of log exports in Sabah and Sarawak are showing signs of firming as log supplies are tight. Recent reports say log arrivals at Tanjongman, the main log depot in Sarawak, are being delayed due to poor weather conditions. Prices are approximately US\$185 per cubic meter for Mertanti regular and US\$145 per cubic meter for small Meranti. Due to strong active purchasing by India and China, Kapur prices are high and firming. The latest Kapur prices were said to have reached US\$260 per cubic meter for logs from Sarawak while logs from Sabah have been selling at around US\$245 per cubic meter.

Housing starts in Japan were reported at 27.9 percent lower than the same time

period a year ago at 787,410 units. According to the JLR, this was the lowest level recorded in 45 years. The largest decline was seen in the number of condominium units built, which were down 58 percent from a year prior.

Guyana

The role of the Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC) is growing and expanding as it ensures forests are pivotal to mitigating climate change, performed without compromising its support and promotion of the timber industry, according to a statement released by the Ministry of Agriculture.

Efforts have been made over the last two years to strengthen the capacity of the GFC to address climate change issues such as Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) and Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS).

The GFC however, states it has not lost sight of its goal of achieving a competitive and sustainable wood-processing sector where the emphasis is on value-added products. Established to focus on the development production capacity and markets for wood products The Forest Products and Marketing Development Council (FPMDC) encourages investments in the sector.

The Minister of Agriculture said, "Notwithstanding our efforts in terms of looking for incentives arising from the role our forests play in climate change mitigation, there will continue to be a role for the forestry sector. The changes will not affect the timber sector in any way that will see it downsized or lead to loss of jobs or closure. In fact, the measures will allow growth within the context of the emphasis on sustainable forestry management."

Market news for Guyana included upward trends toward more processing and lower log exports. According to reports, recent trade in Purpleheart logs and prices remain stable. Encouraging and positive production of rough sawn (undressed) Greenheart was also reported. Active buying for (undressed) Purpleheart was reported only for Select grades with satisfactory average pricing.

Finland

The Finnish Forest Industries Federation (FFIF) recorded a small increase for the Finnish forest industry. The value was €15bn, with €4bn generated by wood products. A spokesperson said the industry has modernized its structures and increased operational efficiencies to develop opportunities during the global recession.

"As markets recover the steady availability of domestic timber at a competitive price will become an increasingly important issue," the spokesperson added, also stating that political decisions concerning energy and labor continued to affect the industry's competitiveness.

In other news, strikes threatened by the Finnish Transport Workers Union (TWU) could cause an upset to the country's forestry industry, according to the Finnish Forest Industries Federation.

The latest news from the International Timber Industry states that one day of strikes at seven Finnish ports has already been held in recent weeks.

In all of Finland's 25 ports Stevedores have been warned that a strike would be held if an agreement is not made. FFIF said industrial action initiated by the union threatened forest industry exports and are leading to loss of export revenues.

FFIF Executive Vice-President Jari Forss, said the union's demands "were not connected with the realities of today."

"The actions of the TWU are endangering the jobs of forest industry employees," he said.

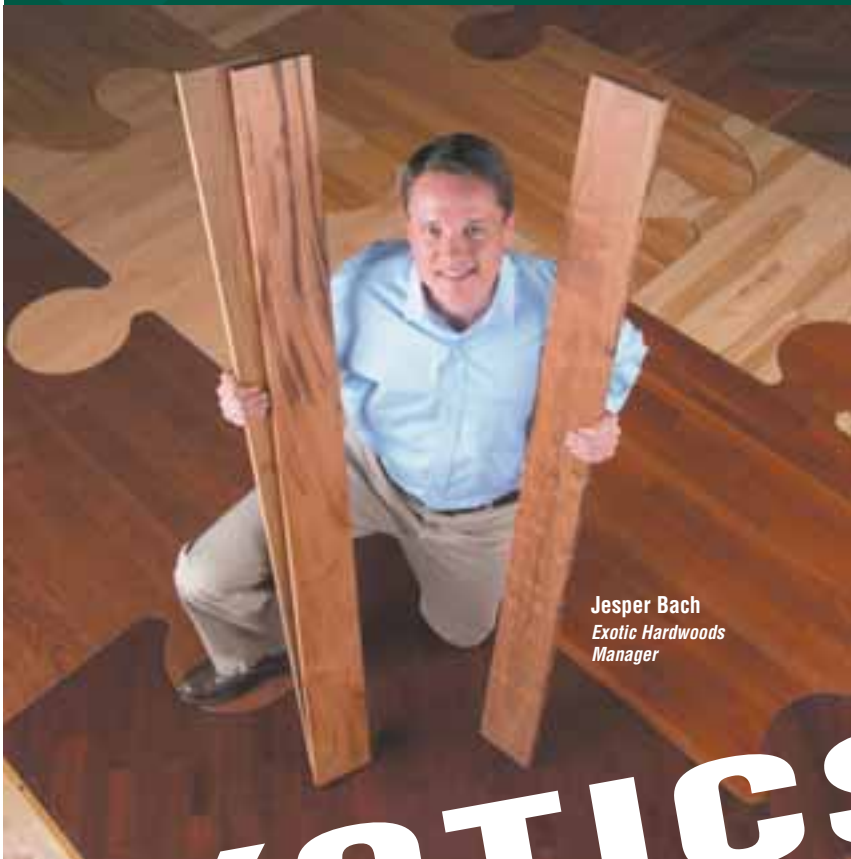
Forss also said the forest industry had undergone difficult structural changes but was well poised to succeed as the economy recovers. "It is unwise to erode opportunities for success by hampering export deliveries."

India

The ministry of finance recently received a submission by the timber sector for changes in import duty levels in the next national budget. The maximum duty reduction request from 10 percent to 7.5 percent

Continued on page 20

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import/export timber products’ stock exchange

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5 x 40' Ohio White Oak 16"+  
3 x 40' Hard Maple 14"+  
Basswood  
4/4 Sel&Btr KD Rgh  
Cherry  
5/4 Prime KD Rgh  
6/4 Prime KD Rgh  
4/4 SEL KD Rgh  
4/4 #1C KD Rgh  
8/4 Prime KD Rgh  
4/4 Sel&Btr KD Rgh  
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4/4 #2C KD Rgh  
Red Oak  
4/4 #1C KD Rgh

Walnut  
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5/4 #2C KD Rgh  
8/4 #2C KD Rgh  
4/4 FAS/1F KD Rgh  
5/4 FAS/1F KD Rgh  
8/4 FAS/1F KD Rgh  
Sycamore  
4/4 #1C #1C&Btr Qtr&Rift KD Rgh  
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4/4 Sel&Btr Sap KD Rgh  
4/4 #1C 1C&Btr WHND KD Rgh  
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5/4 #2C Qtr&Rift KD Rgh  
4/4 Sel&Btr Rift 4" Strips KD Rgh  
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Cumala  
4/4 Sel/Bet 31,921  
Edinam  
4/4 Sel/Bet 11,716  
8/4 Sel/Bet 16,363  
Genuine Mahogany  
4/4 Sel/Bet 2,356  
5/4 Sel/Bet 105  
6/4 Sel/Bet 7,739  
8/4Sel/Bet 3,474  
10/4 Sel/Bet 2,098  
4/4 FEQ 13,947  
5/4 FEQ 6,050  
8/4 FEQ 5,565

8/4 FEQ 18,405  
10/4 FEQ 14,859  
12/4 FEQ 406  
16/4 FEQ 16,310  
Ipe  
4/4 Sel/Bet 12,453  
5/4 Sel/Bet 7,843  
Jatoba  
4/4 Sel/Bet 36,466  
Lacewood  
4/4 Sel/Bet 5,598  
8/4 Sel/Bet 418  
Marupa  
4/4 Sel/Btr 16,990  
5/4 Sel/Btr 7,003  
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5/4 FAS/1F&Btr #1 Com, #2 Com

6/4 FAS/1F&Btr #1 Com, #2 Com

8/4 FAS/1F&Btr #1 Com, #2 Com

10/4 FAS/1F&Btr #1 Com, #2 Com

12/4 FAS/1F&Btr #1 Com, #2 Com

YELLOW POPLAR

4/4 FAS/1F&Btr #1 Com, #2 Com

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**BUSINESS TRENDS  
(ABROAD)**

Continued from page 17

will help lower production costs and make exports more competitive according to the industry. Analysts say such a reduction could also help the government meet its commitment to align import duties to Asean levels, say analysts.

India's log imports are reported by CAPEXIL at 3,875,300 cubic meters compared to 3,931,400 cubic meters during the same time period a year earlier.

According to sources, exports have seen an increase of up to 86 percent in shipments of sawn timber and 29 percent in exports of other wood products. The increases have helped offset the declines in exports of wooden furniture.

**Ghana**

Part of a US\$30 billion global fund set aside by developed countries on climate change has been awarded to Ghana, according to the country's Minister of Environment, Science and Technology. The funds are to be used to implement climate change related socio-economic activities. The government was in the process of developing a low carbon emissions growth plan, which would anchor Ghana's sustainable development agenda, the Minister said.

With a low level of carbon emissions compared to developed countries and even when compared to the large developing countries, steps are still needed to reduce emissions further, the Minister added. One percent of the District Assemblies Common Fund has been committed to a massive tree-planting program, which the government hopes will reduce deforestation and forest degradation.

Expected to grow by at least 5.7 percent this year, Ghana's economy will gain compared to the 5 percent achieved in 2009. Ghana will begin oil production this year and the oil reserves found are estimated to contain 1.8 billion barrels of crude oil.

Some recent sawnwood prices for Ghana

were reported as US\$855 per m3 for Aframosia and US\$500 per m3 for Asanfina. Price differences between air-dried and kiln dried African Mahogany were sizeable at US\$595 and US\$665 per m3 respectively.

**Canada**

According to Random Lengths International, Canadian exports to China recently reached a record at 830 million board feet, more than double the previous year. Observers predict that Chinese imports from Canada will continue to surge through 2010 and beyond.

Random Lengths also said that Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation forecasted Canadian housing starts of 141,900 in 2009 and 164,900 in 2010.

**Germany**

The state-owned forestry administration of Thuringia lumbered over one million cubic meters in 2009. According to the IHB Fordaq Network, that amount is significantly lower than in years before hurricane Kyrill, when the total cutting volume was at 1.4 million cubic meters. Currently the administration has a logging plan stipulating a timber removal of 1.1 million cubic meters from state-owned forests.

"The reforestation of the clearings and the ecological forest conversion with a view to climate change are our principal tasks," Jürgen Reinholz, Thuringia's forestry minister said.

Requests for storm fallen timber volumes from the state-owned forestry operation Hesse-Forst after the recent hurricane Xynthia are still running. Although the highlands haven't been surveyed yet, the headquarters of the operation in Kassel expects that 1.1 million cubic meters of softwood and 100 cubic meters of hardwood have been ravaged by Xynthia.

In related news the representatives of the forestry and wood industry have argued for steady log prices in the Southwest of Germany. During a recent periodical meeting of the forestry department of Baden-Württemberg at Bobbligen, analysts of both sides said that for more reliable planning the up and down of prices should stop.

President of the sawmill and wood indus-

try association of Baden-Württemberg VSH, Wilhelm Schilling said to the forestry sector, "You can act on the assumption of a continuous demand." He also underlined the importance of steady prices to close the gap between log and lumber prices.

**BUSINESS TRENDS  
(CANADA)**

**ONTARIO**

This year, the winter saw fewer storms and much less snowfall than in previous years, thus causing less disruptions to the logging and sawmilling industries. The ground freeze supported the industry early in the winter and throughout the season. Sawmills were thus able to purchase logs and had sufficient inventories to operate consistently. However, many mills reported they had not committed to log or timber purchases needed to run routine production schedules. According to areas contacted, some mills advised they had been idled. It was also reported that sawmill production was down and had been off for several months. Kiln-dried inventories have dropped, with quantities and rate of drying lumber being insufficient. Competitive pressures are fuelling higher prices. Markets are still weak due to the economic downturn. Wholesalers are purchasing only what they need to fill orders.

On the face of it, the sharp rise in lumber prices over the past several weeks in early February, should have been welcome news for Canada's recession-battered forestry companies. But industry players were not prepared to relax their cautious stance as they searched for signs that a true recovery in the critical U.S. housing market was taking hold. Prices had increased to reflect the reduced supply but there was no actual upswing in demand. U.S. housing construction activity reached its highest level in six months in January, a better-than-expected increase of 2.8 percent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 591,000 units, slightly higher than the 580,000 economists had forecasted.

On international markets, the demand for

Ash has been keeping business for this specie steady. Orders and shipments are keeping close pace with the production. For Aspen, however, there is no change in market trends – business is with established contacts. The industry is currently favouring Oak supplies, therefore Basswood is not as in great demand but has remained steady. The developing production has been absorbed by demand for most grades and thicknesses.

Market conditions for Hard Maple remained cautious, especially in light of the potential run up in supplies during peak production season. Wholesalers are engaging area sources for required quantities of Hard Maple needed to meet their sales or manufacturing production. Demand is surpassing the supply at this time, resulting in prices being moderately higher for various grades.

Private economists are urging the Finance Minister James Flaherty to tread cautiously and keep spending flowing in this fragile recovery. Economists suggested Flaherty look past some of the better-than-expected data in Canada and the United States and not move too quickly to rein in the deficit.

Economists now see average economic growth of 2.7 percent this year, according to a Bloomberg survey. That's higher than the 2.3 percent Flaherty projected in his September 2009 fiscal update, but still well below the 5 to 6 percent that typically follows a deep slump. "The dominant theme here is that unlike recoveries from previous recessions this one's going to be fairly slow and drawn out," said the deputy chief economist at Toronto-Dominion Bank. "I don't think the government should be tightening fiscal policy before the recovery has gained greater traction."

Canada is in a better position to carefully talk about a plan for tackling the budget shortfall that the global downturn spawned. Mr. Flaherty and Treasury Board President Stockwell Day have said the budget will include a road map to bring the budget back into balance within five years. Most Canadian economists say outlining such a strategy is a good idea, but caution against being too aggressive. Unless economic growth turns out to be significantly stronger than economists are projecting, the recov-

Continued on page 21

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BUSINESS TRENDS  
(CANADA)

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ery won't do enough to get back into a balanced budget, said TD's deputy chief economist. "The budget is an opportunity to lay out a framework for what you try to do over a five-year horizon, and in that context there's a perfectly good opportunity to outline how you intend to, after the economy's gained significant momentum, get back into a balanced budget."

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QUEBEC

Industry contacts report that recent market surge was fueled by supply shortages. The economy is weak and is a drag on hardwood business. The contraction of the economy, high fuel costs, there are issues plaguing demand, restrictions to working capital, and the high Canadian dollar, all make for very challenging times for the industry. Competitive supply pressures are also part of the mix of doing business. Business remains normal, under these challenging times, for Aspen, although it is based on established buyer and seller agreements. Basswood activity was bolstered by increased exports in early winter for lumber and components. Demand is reported to be keeping close pace with developing production. Prices were stable for most grades, but edged forward recently in past weeks. Prices for kiln dried Hard Maple responded to market's increased momentum and tightening supplies. Unselected Hard Maple sales are steady, but not intense, with prices being stable. Contacts report steady activity for green Hard Maple, especially as it relates to colour having a strong influence on the level of demand. Winter cut production peaked, thereby minimizing supply strains and related price inflation. Demand for Red Oak remains strong, both on domestic and international markets. Buyers of green lumber are trying to rebuild inventories to avoid production downtime or losing sales. With sawmill production currently focussing on whitewoods,

green Red Oak supplies were only marginally adequate throughout February and early March. Most regions contacted reported strong demand from export markets, thus lowering inventories for White Oak. Orders and shipments of green stocks are absorbing developing production. Prices are remaining firm. Prices for pallet lumber and cants remain in check due to industrial lumber production remaining low. Demand for wooden packaging and raw materials are at a slow pace. The need for pallets and containers is low due to the weak economy. It is also reported that there is no change for board road material, with little activity being reported as the oil and gas field construction is slowest during the winter months. Many people around the world followed the news on the earthquake in Haiti in January and February. Volunteers were deployed to assist in relief efforts – even forestry companies donated lumber to assist in the rebuilding of homes in that country. Quebec's forest industry provided some assistance to the rebuilding of Haiti by donating \$2 million of wood for the construction of 2,000 housing units adapted for the climate and needs of that country. Herve Deschenes of FP Innovations said Haiti cannot be rebuilt with the same materials and standards as existed before the earthquake. FB Innovations would like to send modular houses, similar to what was built for Indonesia following the 2004 tsunami. Quebec companies are offering the lumber because Haiti has been almost totally deforested, and they will call on other industries to provide doors and windows, and on the governments to pay the cost of building the modules and shipping them to the Caribbean. While the early government reaction was positive, the companies involved were not waiting for a government initiative, said the Quebec Wood Export Bureau, who is also involved in the initiative. Other provinces may join the project, and the forest industry in other countries were also interested in making a contribution. The seasonally adjusted annual rate of housing starts reached 186,300 units in January 2010. This is an increase from the

December 2009 rate of 176,100 units, according to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). According to final figures, actual housing starts for 2009 totalled 149,081 units, with activity improving as the year progressed. "Housing starts improved in both the singles and multiples segments in January," said the Chief Economist at CMHC's Market Analysis Centre. "These increases are similar to the ones that occurred in December." The seasonally adjusted annual rate of urban starts increased by 4.4 percent to 165,200 units in January. Urban multiple starts increased by 5.7 percent to 76,300 units while single urban starts increased by 3.3 percent to 88,900 units. January's seasonally adjusted annual rate of urban starts increased by 7.3 percent in Quebec, by 2.3 percent in Atlantic Canada, and by 1.5 percent in Ontario.

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BUSINESS TRENDS  
(U.S.A.)

LAKE STATES

Hardwood suppliers in the Lake States Region report improving market conditions overall. Business activity is brisk but log supply shortages are hindering sales, according to sources. An Ohio hardwood lumber supplier said, "People are placing orders, products are shipping, but whether it's due to shortages in the marketplace or whether it's an actual increase in the overall need for hardwood lumber and whether it will continue remains to be seen. "There are lumber shortages across the hardwood region, particularly in Walnut, upper grade Red Oak and Poplar items," he continued. "We cut Ash, Basswood, Cherry, Hickory, Hard and Soft Maple, Walnut and Red and White Oak. Walnut is moving well, Red Oak is moving better and Poplar and Ash are also picking up." A concern that appears to be apparent in all regions is container availability. "Container pricing and availability is becoming a problem for people all over. I think as fuel prices increase this summer

that will be an issue that will eat into profit margins," he said. "It's going to be tough to cover the spread or to stay profitable between green prices coming up and kiln-dried price resistance on the customer's part of being able to pay higher prices." The source, which markets to distribution yards and endusers, is cautiously optimistic about the coming months. "It's anybody's guess; I'm not convinced that this uptick has legs. I think it is short fused. We're planning differently but I think it will be flat as we move through the next six months." In Michigan, a hardwood supplier said his business was up by 30 percent. "It's partially supply driven, but we are also getting more inquiries," he explained. "Our sales are definitely better. Since the week before Christmas even, we've had a steady increase of volume sales. In reference to the factors involved in the recent increase, he said, "Housing is picking up a little bit, not great but substantially better. Of course the export market is picking up, which is helping out." Supplying Red and White Oak, Basswood, Hard and Soft Maple, Birch, Beech and Cherry, the source said log supplies were scarce. "My inventory level is up slightly but that's because it was a record low last year," he said. In the next six months, he expects business conditions to get better. "I think it will gradually get better to the point where people will start putting up a little more inventory and maybe put a little money into their plant too," he said. "We have equipment upgrades on hold right now. The price of logs is going up and not coming back down, so you have to improve your equipment to get more out of the log and become more efficient or we won't be running that long. If we can get a couple of quarters under our belt with significant improvement in sales from last year, we'll probably go ahead with the project this fall."

•

NORTHEAST

Northeastern lumber suppliers are mixed as some report improving business conditions and others report moderate changes

Continued on page 22



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**BUSINESS TRENDS**  
**(U.S.A.)**

Continued from page 21

in business activity.

A Massachusetts hardwood lumber supplier said weather is creating a problem along with the general economy, and he has not seen much improvement.

In regard to the factors involved with the lack of improvement in his area he said, "Housing is the number one issue. There are other issues like the stimulus dollars that are going into road building and things of that nature, not into general construction."

The hardwood distributor that stocks all domestic hardwoods said supply has not been an issue. "Our inventory levels are good. We reduced our inventory back in 2005 and we've been running with a fairly level inventory for about the last year and a half."

He mentioned that prices have been fairly consistent but he does expect that to change along with supply in the coming weeks.

"As people leave the industry for one reason or another the remaining players are going to have to work harder but probably not make any more margin," he concluded for the remaining outlook of 2010.

A hardwood supplier in Pennsylvania said limited supply has increased product demand making overall market conditions better in his area. "It is definitely more supply-oriented than demand. We think that the supply is being limited by the amount of mills actually going out of business as well as production being down," he explained. "Conditions are better but I don't think we're out of the woods yet."

Supplying Cherry, Hard and Soft Maple, Red and White Oak and Ash the contact said most species were moving well and his inventory levels were good for logs and fair for lumber. As for pricing, he said he was looking for things to level off over the next few months." On stumpage prices we've seen an increase in the last six months and we're looking for it to stay stable in the coming months," he said.

The 60 percent domestic and 40 percent

export supplier mentioned in reference to transportation costs, "Export container prices and availability are rapidly increasing."

Taking a look at the next six months, he said, "For our company and our situation the outlook is good, for the industry as a whole I think it's fair."

**SOUTHEAST**

A hardwood lumber supplier in Tennessee said demand for pallet cants was good in his area because many mills are out of logs. "Anything you have for sale can easily be sold and anything you sell today seems as if you can get more for it next week."

Compared to six months ago he said the market was better. Supplying Red and White Oak, Ash, Gum and Sycamore, the source also mentioned that Red and White Oak was moving well but availability of many species was tight. "We buy a lot of outside lumber and it's hard to find it at a price you can sell it at," he explained. "Our inventory levels are at historical lows."

The contact, which predominately sells lumber to the export market, said transportation was quickly becoming an issue. "Containers are becoming tight; the bookings on the steamships keep getting pushed back."

Going forward, the source said when the weather clears he expects improvement. "If we can get some timber in we can make some money, if the price of logs stays reasonable. I think business will remain steady if supply comes back."

In Mississippi, a hardwood lumber and hardwood flooring supplier said while demand is improving, supply is decreasing. "Overall, things seem to be getting better, but we've just got a different set of problems now. There is more demand on the product but there are also fewer products on the market. Pricing is up substantially, but so is log cost," he explained. The contact attributed availability issues in part to the weather. "It's been so wet, we can't get any logs. You can buy all the logs you want from the landowners but you're not going to get them, it's too wet."

Supplying Red and White Oak, Ash and

Poplar, he said all species were moving well but inventory levels were down. "We're out of logs; it's as simple as that. For any tract of timber that can be logged we expect the prices to be up."

"Availability of credit is also an issue that is becoming larger everyday for our entire industry," he continued. The supplier, which markets to flooring mills, distribution yards, and cabinet and furniture manufacturers said he expects continued increases in prices for finished products over the next six months. "Once you get into late spring and summer there is no way that we as an industry can produce enough this year to satisfy demand."

**WEST COAST**

A hardwood supplier in California expects a market improvement in the months to come but currently did not see an improvement. "We're bidding larger jobs and we've got more inquiries coming in, which sets us up for the summer months, but at this moment our sales levels are still off."

The contact said uncertainty in the marketplace is playing the biggest role in the economy. "Right now people don't want to spend money on any improvement project. Some of the commercial projects had already been financed or budgeted and they have to go forward. But as far as what's happening in this general economy it's people having a very cautious attitude."

Supplying more than 40 species including Cherry, Alder and Poplar, he said Alder was the number one seller currently. "I believe Alder is our number one specie right now. I think it has a lot to do with the fact that pricing is easing substantially on Alder. One thing I have noticed is availability of Alder is nonexistent so we can't quote a lot of jobs using Alder. Other species like Cherry, Red and White Oak and Poplar are readily available. I have had trouble finding the thicker stock in certain species. A lot of people are dropping their slower moving items and not sawing them so we've seen shortages of heavier timber products like 10/4 and 12/4."

He said his inventory levels are down by 30 percent and prices were firming up. "We have just recently seen price increases and I think that has more to do with log

Import/Export Wood Purchasing News

shortages than anything.

"Truck availability has been good; truckers are eager to fill loads and I haven't had any transportation issues," he added.

Marketing to small and medium cabinet and furniture manufacturers, the source believes things will turn around in the next six months. "We have a lot of irons in the fire and we might have some lead time issues just because we have to get the bins filled up. We're also bringing our employees back up to a 40-hour week, which may cause a temporary adjustment in our workflow but I think things are brighter in the future."

In Fontana, Calif., a hardwood supplier said, "I don't think the market is much better than six months ago and if there is any improvement it is very slight."

Supplying an even mix of domestic and imported hardwoods, the source said Poplar is taking the lead in sales. "We handle about 25-plus domestic and 25-plus imported hardwoods and the Poplars are moving well. The highest volume is all grades and thicknesses of Poplar and behind that would be Red Oak followed by Hard Maple then Walnut and Birch and White Oak."

Regarding supply issues, the contact said, "We're having a farther lead-time obtaining our species because of weather—wet weather in the south and the extreme snow in the north. Our inventory levels are down as well. We went from an \$8.2 million inventory over two years ago down to about a \$4 million inventory. That's beginning to increase because we're buying more because we don't know if supplies will be there as quickly as we need it."

When asked what species are moving well and which are slower, he said, "It varies by species and thicknesses. I think percentage-wise, Poplar has seen the biggest increases lately and we've seen Ash trending upwards. The Red Oaks are also trending upwards along with Walnut but the largest increase is Poplar."

As a whole, the source expects 2010 to be challenging overall. "I think it's still going to be a challenging year. There are still some sawmills, wholesalers and even manufacturers that went into this thing in a weak position. I still think we're going to lose more people in the industry," he said.



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# NEWSWIRES

**Brattleboro, Vermont**—Cersosimo Lumber Company and Maine Woods Company recently announced the formation of a cooperative hardwood manufacturing and marketing program.

“After a lengthy shutdown and careful re-organization, Maine’s largest hardwood sawmill will restart with a new focus on producing the highest possible quality Maple and Birch,” Vice President and General Manager of Cersosimo Lumber Co., Dan Harrison, said.



Dan Harrison



Monica Hastings

“Cersosimo Lumber Company personnel will assist Maine Woods Company in this effort and utilize Cersosimo’s domestic and international marketing team to exclusively



Peter King



Barbara Larson

represent these new products. Maine Woods Company will continue to market a range of hardwood products within the regions of Maine, Quebec and the Canadian Maritime Provinces. Cersosimo will exclusively represent Maine Woods’ products globally and in North America outside these regions.”

The combined hardwood production of the two companies will be approximately 40 million board feet annually. Cersosimo Lumber Co. also produces 20 million board feet of kiln-dried eastern White Pine per year.

The companies operations include three sawmills, grading and milling facilities, extensive kiln capacity, custom kiln drying facilities, an extensive network of foresters and log concentration yards, railcar loading facilities, transportation, and storage. For more information visit [www.cersosimolumber.com](http://www.cersosimolumber.com) or call 802-254-5691.

**St.-Ephrem, Quebec**—President of Industries PHL, Denis Côté, recently announced that Joe Thompson has been appointed as senior account manager for Western North America. “Well known by sawmillers in western Canada and the Pacific Northwestern United States, Thompson has more than 30 years experience in sawmill optimization and equipment sales,” Côté said.

Industries PHL offers a full range of sawmill and planer mill equipment including optimized edgers, trimmers, band saws, chippers, canters, stackers and stick placers.

Thompson can be reached at 250-248-0261 and by email at [joethompson@industriesphl.com](mailto:joethompson@industriesphl.com).



Joe Thompson

**Mississauga, Ontario**—Weston Forest Group, headquartered here, has been named as one of Canada’s 50 Best Managed Companies. This is the third year in a row the company has received this award.

Sponsored by Deloitte, CIBC Commercial

Banking, Queen’s School of Business and the National Post, this honor recognizes companies that succeed by focussing on their vision, creating stakeholder value and excelling in the global economy.

“This is a tremendous honor,” said Rick Ekstein, president. “We are in the midst of the worst market conditions the forest product industry has ever seen, yet our teams are clearly focused and working hard to achieve our strategic goals. I am extremely proud of our staff.”

“In a tough economy, Weston has continued to focus on their core vision, as well as applying innovative leading business practices and creating stakeholder value,” commented John Hughes, Partner, Private Company service group within Deloitte, a national sponsor of the Best Managed program. “Weston has a vision, and they are actively trying to attain their goals, despite the challenges in the global economy.”

Weston Forest Group was founded in 1953. The companies in the Weston Forest Group supply domestic and imported hardwoods, softwoods, engineered wood products and panel products across Canada, the U.S. and around the globe. For more information about Weston Forest Group visit [www.westonforestgroup.com](http://www.westonforestgroup.com).

**High Point, North Carolina**—According to *Furniture Today* magazine, reductions in shipping capacity have created major headaches for many furniture importers in recent weeks as they struggle to keep merchandise flowing from their Asian factories to their warehouses in the United States.

Space on cargo ships has become increasingly hard to find, and importers state that when it is available, the shipping charges are two to three times higher than they were a year ago.

“The carriers have pulled so many vessels out of service that they created a supply and demand issue that wasn’t there before,” Joseph Condra, director of product development and sourcing at Crescent Fine Furniture told *Furniture Today*. “What is always a critical time is even worse.”

Vice-president of business development at logistics provider Zenith Global Logistics, Steve Wolfe said the situation is the worst he has experienced in more than 15 years of logistics work. “Space definitely is at a premium. It couldn’t be much worse than it is right now,” he added.

Some importers reported that even after booking space, there is a good chance some containers will get bumped off the vessel by an importer willing to pay a higher price for the space. “After the containers for Wal-Mart and a few other big retailers are loaded, the rest of the space is basically up for auction,” Wolfe said.

According to importers and logistics providers, typical cost for a 40-foot container shipped from Asia to the West Coast was approximately \$1,000 last spring. The cost is at least \$2,000 to \$2,500 today to the West Coast and well over \$3,000 to the East Coast.

**Montreal, Quebec**—AbitibiBowater, based here, is seeking damages of up to \$500 million, claiming Newfoundland and Labrador Premier Danny Williams’ government illegally seized its assets after it shuttered operations in the province due to the economic downturn.

One of the largest claims filed against Canada under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), this filing is the latest in an ongoing struggle between the company and the province.

A company statement said, “The provincial government’s expropriation of AbitibiBowater assets and rights, including access to land, timber and water, was arbitrary, discriminatory and illegal under the international law.”

According to international law, the federal government is responsible for the actions of Newfoundland and Labrador where NAFTA provisions are concerned, the U.S. incorporated company said.

Talks with both levels of government failed to produce an agreeable settlement and the company had no choice but to file a claim under NAFTA AbitibiBowater said. “The expropriation was detrimental to the financial position of our company,” said David J. Paterson, president and chief executive officer.

“After operating in Newfoundland and Labrador for more than a century and contributing significantly to the region’s economic, social and sustainable development, the nationalization of AbitibiBowater’s assets was unexpected

Continued on page 25

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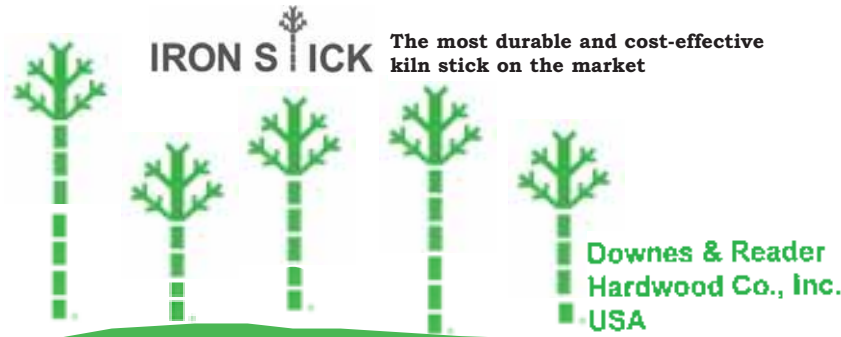
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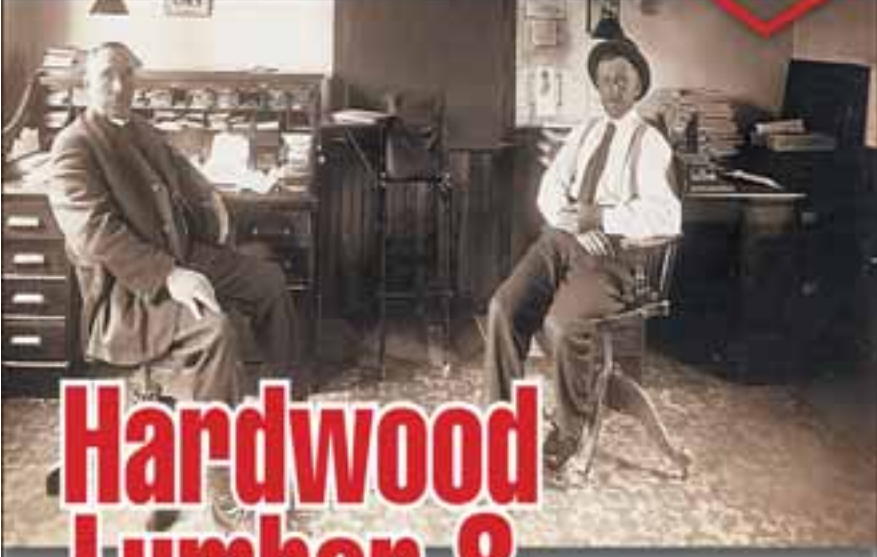
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**Export Sales: John Patterson & Matt Begley**





NEWSWIRES

Continued from page 23

and unnecessary.” Operating under bankruptcy protection in Canada and the United States, with an annual capacity of approximately 3 billion board feet of lumber, AbitibiBowater operates sawmills in Canada and the United States. The company also remanufactures and engineers value-added wood products for use in applications such as mobile homes, flooring components, bed frames, decking and structural roofing.

**New Zealand**—According to The Timber Industry (TTJ) Magazine, Crown Forestry, based here, acquired West Coast forestry operations from state-owned Timberlands. The article states that the region’s sawmilling industry however, is now reduced in size because of insufficient supplies of Radiata Pine and the ban on logging native Rimu. With hundreds of forestry jobs in New Zealand’s West Coast timber industry at risk, the result is a possible loss for Crown. Most of the logs are now being sent out of the region for processing. New Zealand’s government believes this could be solved by having one large sawmill in the area to process most logs. Approximately 560 currently work in the sector, but the West Coast Timber Association said jobs are likely to be lost.

**Sweden**—Sveaskog, headquartered in Kalix, Sweden, recently announced it will supply Wallnäs sawmill, based in Mariannelund with larger amounts of rough timber under a deal designed to guarantee supplies for a new saw line. The family-owned sawmill recently invested £1.3m in a saw that cuts special dimensions to meet customer demand for odd sizes. According to Wallnäs, the line can cut up to 200 dimensions compared to the dozen or so dimensions it said is offered by most competitor sawmills. Chief Executive Officer Bo Pinto said, “We see the market for our products increasing. To achieve our growth we need the supply of inputs and it is up to Sveaskog to obtain hefty loads of rough lumber.” TTJ also said Sveaskog saw a 24 percent growth in operating profits to SKr924m during 2009 from SKr744m in 2008. According to Sveaskog, this was achieved despite a 17 percent net sales decrease equivalent to SKr1.2bn.

**China**—The Forest Stewardship Council

(FSC) recently strengthened its presence in China by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Certification and Accreditation Administration of China (CNCA). According to FSC, the implementation of the MOU will foster stronger collaboration between the two organizations to promote forest certification in China. Information exchange, training, technical collaboration and co-ordination in the development of certification standards is highlighted. Approximately 1.3 million ha of forest in China is FSC certified and over 1,250 companies have FSC chain-of-custody certification.

**Indonesia**—Recent reports from IHB Network indicate some large timber concessionaires in Kalimantan are seeking certification as part of their corporate governance development to try and secure a long-term future in the sector. Sources say certification is viewed not only as a means for getting production onto a more sustainable track but also as providing job security. According to the reports, some concessionaires have approached The Borneo Initiative ([www.theborneoinitiative.org](http://www.theborneoinitiative.org)), a Dutch non-governmental organization specializing in sustainable forest management. This particular organization is said to provide support during the certification process, which will be via the Indonesian Ecolabeling Institute.

**Myanmar**—According to sources, market conditions remain almost the same as reported in January. Demand for Teak and Gurjan remains firm and Pyinkado logs are still selling very well. Fresh logs have started arriving at the log depots and buyers will now become more selective, given the wider choice of grades.

**Canada**—A new study comprised by the Forest Products Association of Canada (FPAC) indicates integrating bio-energy production is key to Canada’s forestry industry survival. According to Canadian Manufacturing.com, Canada’s forest industry continues to struggle with limited demand, pricing pressures from competitors in developing countries, bankruptcies, plant closures and job losses. Searching for a solution to revitalize the industry, the FPAC commissioned a year-long study titled, ‘The Bio-pathways Project,’ which revealed how forestry companies can capitalize on the bio-age by integrating bio-energy production with existing operations. “It’s really about the transformation of the

Continued on page 26



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NEWSWIRES

Continued from page 25

sector,” FPAC’s Vice-president of economics and regulatory affairs, Catherine Cobden said.

Headed by managing director of Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC) world markets in Ottawa, the study sourced from more than 60 industry experts, executives and governments assessing 27 traditional and emerging biochemical and bio-energy technologies on an economic, social and environmental level.

“There are some segments that are always going to be profitable. Lumber is the most obvious one. It will be cyclical in nature, but at the end of the day it will be profitable,” Cobden told Canadian Manufacturing.com.

Port Angeles, Washington—

According to *Forest2Market* an increasing number of Pacific coast port authorities are investigating potential opportunities for increasing exports. Port Angeles and Astoria, among others are hoping to export logs just as they did decades ago. The report said others are looking at serving new energy markets with wood pellets.

*Forest2Market* also said further south in Sacramento, California, interest is not in logs or lumber but in wood pellets. The Sacramento-Yolo Port Commission approved a permit for Enligna U.S. to develop a wood pellet manufacturing facility at the Port of West Sacramento. Enligna expects to begin production of up to 170,000 tons of wood pellets annually. The firm says it will export to Asia, Canada and Europe.

The East Coast is also seeing pellet business at the ports. A German utility company, RWE Innogy, recently announced plans for a 750,000-ton per year pellet mill in Waycross, Georgia. The company plans to start shipping pellets just over 100 miles to the Port of Savannah.

WASHINGTON SCENE -

Continued from page 2

In a letter to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, AWC chairman Mark Brinkmeyer made AWC’s building expertise available to U.S. government officials as plans are

Import/Export Wood Purchasing News

developed to help the country rebuild. For more information visit [www.awc.org](http://www.awc.org).

BCAP Regulations Released

The American Forest & Paper Association’s president and CEO Donna Harman recently issued a response to the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s release for public comment of its draft regulations for the Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP).

“Now that the long-awaited BCAP rule has finally been released for public review, AF&PA will be analyzing it closely in the coming days to prepare and file detailed comments,” the response states.

“The forest products industry is proud of its record as a leading renewable energy producer, and we support initiatives that encourage the development of additional renewable energy. We caution, however, that such efforts must take care to avoid the unintended consequence of displacing existing renewable energy production in industries like forest products that provide high-paying manufacturing jobs in rural communities.”

The AF&PA also urged USDA to work to minimize BCAP’s distortions to existing markets for biomass; expedite BCAP’s provisions intended to increase the supply of biomass; and implement the program in a fair and transparent way that guarantees all stakeholders’ concerns are given fair consideration.

For more information visit [www.afandpa.org](http://www.afandpa.org).

Developing Stewardship Contract

Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell recently sent a letter to Regional Foresters, Directors and Deputy Chiefs outlining his desire to develop a single blended stewardship contract to relieve some of the burden from end result contracting and to reduce the number of contract versions and pages of requirements.

Tidwell outlined the fact that stewardship end-result contracts have been in place for 10 years, with four years remaining to use that authority. He stated his desire to seek permanent authority of this important tool, but he believes the best way to accomplish this is to develop one simplified contract instrument. Tidwell’s new contract will focus on achieving the end results identified through the collaborative process, facilitate best value contracting and protect the interests of the stakeholders and government.

A team comprised of individuals from the Directors of Forest Management and Acquisition Management will develop this new contract.

OBITUARY

Elias “Lou” Bishara

**New London, Connecticut—**Elias “Lou” Bishara, president of Del Valle Kahaman, a plywood importing and exporting company, recently passed away. Bishara was born in New London in 1928 and graduated from Chapman Tech High School, also in New London in 1946.

He enlisted in the U.S. Army and was stationed in Japan at the end of World War II until he was honorably discharged in 1948. Graduating from the University of Southern California (USC) in 1951, Bishara married Sue Perner who preceded

him in death in 1996.

In 1965 he joined Del Valle, Kahman & Co. in San Francisco, Calif., where upon his partner’s retirement he would become sole owner.

He is survived by his brother, George Bishara and a niece, Jill Bishara.

Memorial donations may be made in his name to the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, 1441 Eastlake Avenue, Los Angeles, Calif., 90033.

IMPORT/EXPORT CALENDAR

APRIL

**Dubai International Wood/Wood Machinery Show**, Dubai Airport Expo, contact: 971-4-28-29-299. [www.dubai-woodshow.com](http://www.dubai-woodshow.com). Apr. 13-15.

**International Wood Products Association, World of Wood Convention**, Eden Roc, A Renaissance Beach Resort & Spa, Miami Beach, Fla. Contact: 703-820-6696. Apr. 28-30.

MAY

**Asian Building Technology Exposition**, Impact Exhibition & Convention Center, Bangkok, Thailand. Contact: 66-2-7172477. May 5.

**INTERZUM MOSCOW**, furniture manufacturing and interior design expo, Moscow, Russia. Contact: [m.zoellig@koelmesse.de](mailto:m.zoellig@koelmesse.de) or 49-221-821-2932. May 12-15.

**Habitat Expo**, Mexico World Trade Center, Mexico City, Mexico. Visit online at [www.expoua.com](http://www.expoua.com). May 20-22.

**Hardwood Plywood & Veneer Assoc., Annual Meeting**, Doubletree Paradise Valley Resort, Scottsdale, Ariz. Contact: 703-435-2900. May 23-25.



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