

DDC Responds to European Union Wood Concerns Treating Wood Destined for Europe Hot Topic for Global Distributors

By DDC, DDJC, and DDSP Public Affairs

The European Union (EU) now requires 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. The measures are to prevent the introduction of the pinewood nematode, a microscopic eelworm.

Using NMWP on a large scale as a supplier to United States military located within the European Community, the emergency measures posed a big challenge to the Defense Distribution Center (DDC). For its two strategic distribution platforms, Defense Distribution Depot Susquehanna, Pennsylvania (DDSP) and Defense Distribution Depot San Joaquin, California (DDJC), the largest distribution centers within DLA, this was a huge undertaking.

“To ensure DDC became compliant, the undertaking required coordination, research and testing of methods,” said Susan Earle, DDC Lead Packaging Specialist, Distribution Operations. NMWP items and sources were identified, new



After an employee stamps the treated wood with a “Pest Free” mark, he/she adheres a label writes their initials. The yellow label is easy for future material handlers to identify.



DDSP-M Woodworker Roger Tetzloff drills holes into the thickest pieces of wood and inserts sensor probes to monitor the temperature during a “burn” and verify 56 degrees Celsius is maintained for no less than 30 minutes.

equipment procured, and personnel trained. All necessary procedures, processes, equipment, and plant layouts were arranged within just a few months.

Three treatment options are allowed: heat treatment (HT), fumigation or chemical pressure impregnation (CPI). Opting with heat treatment, the DDC purchased two thermal chambers. The chambers measure 41-feet in length and 10-feet wide and high, it is powered by electricity. The air is heated with propane and circulated by fans under the interior aluminum flooring. Sensors monitor the floor and ceiling heat to maintain a cycle not exceeding 196 degrees Fahrenheit inside the insulated structure.

Striving to improve cost effectiveness, the DDSP NMWP project officer, John Price investigated the measure requiring wood to have a moisture content of less than 20%. Price knew that in addition to the crates received by vendors, a significant number of pallets, skids, containers and boxes already store materiel destined for the EU, under cover, in warm dry warehouses at both DDJC and DDSP, as well as other DLA distribution centers. Price recommended testing of NMWP to measure moisture content, since moisture is required to support the pinewood nematode.

Scanning for acceptable levels of moisture content below 20% verifies the lumber is “Pest Free” and it can be marked accordingly. This process was approved for use Department of Defense (DoD) wide, saving time and money.

In addition to testing and treating various wood products when necessary, DDJC and DDSP staff document and create an audit trail by recording the associated Transportation Control Number, National Stock Number, number of pieces, and other specifics of the shipment. It is anticipated the moisture meter process will reduce the manual correction of non-



Located on the back end of the thermal chamber are indicators showing the temperature of ceiling and floor. These regulate the heat cycle so as not to exceed 196 degrees Fahrenheit.

compliant shipments by 90%, resulting in substantial cost savings in processing and shipping wood products to the EU.

The future will likely bring more changes to the procedures. The use of NMWP will reduce as more pressed wood pallets and cardboard containers are used in the EDC. They cost less

but have a short life span; cardboard containers eventually may be replaced with rigid plastic containers, especially for truck routes where they can easily be returned.

“Meeting the European Packaging requirements was a challenge for the DDC,” said Earle. “Thanks to the efforts of the packaging professionals at our distribution centers this effort has been transparent to the customers.”

One out of a dozen in existence, the thermal chamber in operation at DDSP was purchased from Pest Heat for \$35,000.



DDJC EU Wood Heat Chamber

By Doug Imberi, DDJC Public Affairs

As of Oct. 1, 2001 all wood products shipped to customers in the European Theater of Operations required special certification. The European Union now requires all softwood that could contain the pine wood nematode be heat treated to kill the tiny insect, which kills pine trees.

To comply with the new regulation, the Defense Distribution Center (DDC) purchased a computer controlled heat chamber for the Defense Distribution Depot San Joaquin, CA (DDJC), which can accommodate 320 pallets at a time.

Once the core temperature of the wood is heated to 133 degrees Fahrenheit for 30 minutes, they are certified as being nematode free.

Distribution Facilities Specialist Danny Cannon has been working the project for the past six months. “Many European countries regard their forests as national treasures,” said Cannon. “This regulation is Europe’s answer to protecting their forests from the nematode. The nematode has already caused widespread losses to trees in Japan. The nematode can be found in numerous mid-western and eastern states.

According to Cannon the nematode only affects softwood. Hardwoods and manufactured woods like particle or pressed board do not harbor the insect.

Currently all wood purchased by DDJC for shipping items will be treated by the manufacturer. Spools, blocking and bracing materials, and other wood used for dunnage will have to be treated prior to purchase.

“All the lumber producers are getting compliant and the materials will be readily available,” said Cannon. “However, initially wood will cost about 20 cents more a board foot.”

As of Oct. 1, customs agents at all European ports of entry inspect shipments to make sure each pallet or separate piece of wood is stamped with the “nematode free stamp.” If not, the shipment goes in quarantine.

Quarantined shipments will undergo costly and lengthy delays as the shipments will have to be re-palletized and the wood not in compliance burned.

DDJC’s biggest European shipments contain Unitized Group Rations (UGR). According to Cannon DDJC purchased 2,500 hardwood pallets prior to delivery of the heat chamber so as not to impact UGR support.

Procedures and documentation will be inspected by a certified inspector on a monthly basis to maintain accreditation.



Heat Treated (HT) wood is stamped with a specified “Pest Free” mark, including the country of origin and location US-DDSP.