

International Symposium on Legality Verified Wood 2010
Part Two Report: Activities in Japan to Tackle Illegal Logging Issues

Presenter Information

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Career summary	<p>1984 Graduated from Hokkaido University, School of Fisheries Sciences, Fisheries Department (major in bio-resources)</p> <p>1987 Graduated from Hokkaido University, Faculty of Agriculture, Forestry Department (major in forestry accounting)</p> <p>1987–2002 Nice Corporation, foreign wood division (posted to Portland, Oregon 1994–1998)</p> <p>2004 to present North Japan Wood Material Distribution Cooperative</p>

Report Outline

Approaches to Wood Legality Verification as a Domestic Log Supplier

A. North Japan Wood Material Distribution Cooperative

Our wood material distribution cooperative was established on April 1, 2003, by materials producers and associated organizations in Iwate Prefecture.

At that time, there was no market for small-diameter, bent, and short timber unfit for regular lumber and other grade B wood, which was left in piles at logging sites. Our cooperative was established to arrange large-lot, stable supply of material to plywood plants located in coastal Iwate Prefecture. We are now engaged in joint sales of wood produced by cooperative members to plywood factories in Iwate Prefecture, Miyagi Prefecture, Akita Prefecture, Aomori Prefecture, and Hokkaido.

In FY2003, our first year, the cooperative had 27 members with joint sales of 26,000 cubic meters. In FY2009, the cooperative had 98 members with joint sales of 222,000 cubic meters.

B. Goho-wood Certification Efforts

1. Legality Verified Wood Supply Trends

Our cooperative understands that wood materials producers are at the starting line of legality verified wood certification, as the origin of wood distribution. We have advanced efforts for the goho-wood system right from the start under the direction of the National Federation of Wood Material Producers Cooperatives, the central organization to which we belong, advised our members as a certification body, and have now certified all 100 of our members as goho-wood suppliers. We also explain to new members that all logs that the cooperative jointly sells to plywood factories are goho-wood, and that certification as a goho-wood supplier is a prerequisite to joining the cooperative.

2. Efforts to Secure Credibility, and Evaluation

We require all goho-wood suppliers to attend training lectures, and have them acquire knowledge regarding the goho-wood system. Our certification renewal training last year was conducted together with two other certifying bodies, and we held a separate additional training session for members with no prior training. We also distribute a goho-wood handbook and a video “Japan’s Actions against Illegal Logging” to new members for self-study, and certify them after their self-study is completed. The self-study is confirmed through submission of “self-study reports” with answers to questions regarding the goho-wood system.

As the basis for goho-wood certification, we urge members to submit upon log production and shipment copies of government documents (notification of legal logging, protected forest logging permits, national or prefecture-owned forest standing timber sales contracts, etc.) that are the proof of legality. We file these documents and regularly compare them with shipment documents to the plywood plants. This is to ensure that all the raw materials are goho-wood.

Meanwhile, at the logging sites we call for safety measures and for clear signage identifying the businesses conducting the logging.

3. Certificate Use

The certified supplier number and the phrase “from a sustainable forest” are submitted together to plywood factories on delivery slips, in lieu of certificates, as proof that the materials jointly sold through the cooperative are goho-wood. The plywood factories

maintain the chain of custody (CoC) by attaching copies of our cooperative's delivery slips together with their certificates, in response to requests from trading companies and housing suppliers for goho-wood certification.

4. Issues

While the use of goho-wood certificates is spreading at plywood factories, paper mills, large-scale lumber and laminated wood factories, certificates are often not requested for shipments to local, medium and small lumber plants, and many suppliers still do not voluntarily issue certificates. We must make further efforts both upstream and downstream to advance education on the importance and advantages of goho-wood.

Turning to the maintenance of management books and other documents, almost all the suppliers conduct receipt, shipment, and inventory management by binding their shipping slips (in place of certificates). The individual suppliers require highly detailed guidance.