

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	Entered Matsushita Electric Works (the present Panasonic Electric Works Co., Ltd.) in 1976; assigned to the building products sales division. Spent the next 34 years in the sales division responsible for housing companies and contractors, and served as the head of the Nagoya and Western Tokyo sales offices, and then as the head of sales for Hokkaido. Seconded to the Wooden Home Builders Association of Japan since April 2010.

Report Outline

<p>Title: Toward Spreading Legality Verified Wood in the Wooden Housing Industry</p> <p>I am presently responsible for the Materials Distribution Department at the Wooden Home Builders Association of Japan. Our Association was established as a public interest corporation in 1986 to contribute to the spread and sound development of wood-frame housing. Our chairman is Mr. Ryu Yano, the chairman of Sumitomo Forestry Co., Ltd. We have a total of 463 member companies comprising 357 wooden housing suppliers and 106 materials manufacturers and others. Member efforts toward legality verified wood have been conspicuous at Sumitomo Forestry, Sekisui House, Ltd., the Panasonic Group and other large firms. As a very recent development, compared with a few years ago, medium-sized firms have also been increasingly writing about such topics as “a forest material-cycle society,” “preventing global warming” and “CO₂ sinks” on their websites, exhibiting a high level of environmental awareness, even if they do not explicitly mention certified wood.</p> <p>In an Association members’ questionnaire conducted two years ago, just 9 percent of the members were using certified wood. The possible issues at that time were (1) low recognition (2) the question of necessity, and (3) uncertain costs. Over the past two years, however, the environment surrounding legality verified wood has greatly changed, and it may be said that winds are shifting in the housing market. That shift is evident from the following four items.</p>

- 1) Spread of Long-term Superior Housing Model Projects (Implemented by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism from FY2008)
 - Initially in FY2008, as selection criteria, there were no comments regarding the wood environment, just “use of lumber and other local building materials...” but in FY2009 the phrasing was changed to “use of wood produced from sustainable forests” and “projects that have a strong ripple effect.” The expression was then changed greatly in FY2010 to “work toward the revitalization of forest production activities and correct forest management, and build a material-cycle local economy and society” with a much clearer and more specific stance toward certified wood.
 - Applications from a total of 119 companies in the wooden housing category were selected in five public solicitations from FY2008 through FY2010. The initiative has a great ripple effect, as well over a thousand companies and corporate groups applied.
 - Efforts by the Wooden Home Builders Association of Japan
The Association’s “Long-life Wooden Home Model” (jointly proposed with 51 small- and medium-sized Association members) was selected in FY2010, and one reason for this is the specification that wood from sustainable forests (certified wood) is used for the majority of the building frame.
- 2) Certification of Long-term Superior Housing Construction Plans (instituted from June 2009)
 - A cumulative total of 115,909 homes (detached houses) were certified through October 2010. Since this August, an average of 9,400 houses have been certified each month, with long-term superior housing remarkably accounting for approximately 35 percent of all new housing starts (detached houses).
- 3) FY 2010 Wooden Home Promotion Project (Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism)
 - 200,000 yen subsidy for the use of local legality verified materials in long-term superior housing by small- and medium-sized housing manufacturers.
- 4) Promotion of Wood Use in Public Buildings
 - The promotion of wood use in public buildings is expected to spread wood use in buildings in general.
(e.g.) Ministop to Open Eco-Conscious Stores (from *Nikkei Shimbun*, November

19, 2010)

First store to open February 2011, and with stores to increase at a pace of 20 stores per year. These stores are built using domestic certified wood.

In this way, sparked by the long-term superior housing program, housing companies can no longer avert environmental issues as they have in the past. The recognition of certified wood is also greatly increasing. In wooden housing, it is also becoming necessary to take special note of certified wood produced from sustainable forests as materials.

As for the third issue noted above, which is the cost aspect, even if the increased costs are viewed as an environmental tax, the key factor is the extent to which the cost increases can be limited. I hope we will take advantage of this opportunity to combine our wisdom and address this.