

## **Michael Snow**

AHEC Executive Director

### **Title:**

American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC) – Responsible Procurement Policy (RPP)

### **I. Overview of the organization and the wood and wood products exported to Japan**

AHEC is an association established to report and provide technical assistance globally for the US Hardwood market with more than one hundred company members and related associations. And, as a part of the forest products export promotion program of the USDA/FAS, AHEC performs various promotions around the world. The AHEC Japan Office has been promoting American hardwoods through its eco-promotions such as the Eco-Furniture Contests and several Eco-Interior Projects since 2001.

### **II. Current situation of Forest Management and Illegal Logging Awareness**

With sustainable forest management practices in the US for hardwood forests, resources have increased every year. The Resources Planning Act (RPA) data shows that between 1953 and 2007, the volume of U.S. hardwood growing stock more than doubled from 5,210 million m<sup>3</sup> to 11,326 million m<sup>3</sup>. U.S. Forest Service forecasts indicate that further increases of 15 to 20 percent are expected in the hardwood growing stock inventory through 2030. Projections of hardwood growth and removals nationwide indicate that growth will continue to exceed removals through to 2050. All forest owners in the United States are subject to federal legislation to protect habitats for threatened species. However, more than four millions number of the owners (farmhouse) owned by an individual, around 80% of those forest. Therefore, it may be said that it is very difficult for each farmers to acquire forest certification system.

### **III. The supply system and the actual state of the supply of wood and wood products with verified legality (Goho-Wood) based on the Guideline**

AHEC carried out research by the third party about legality of American hardwoods in areas of the Eastern and the Midwest from November, 2007. The tough regulations governing other aspects of forest management on private land have been implemented by individual states. The RPA data shows that these regulations have been increasing overall. Based on a comprehensive analysis of U.S. forestry regulatory systems and practices, the third party study concludes that there can be high confidence of legal compliance in the hardwood sector and estimates that stolen timber represents less than 1% of total U.S. hardwood production. And the third party study indicates that hardwood purchased from the U.S. should be considered Low Risk in all five risk categories of the FSC Controlled Wood standard. As the above, the legality of the American hardwood (AHEC-RPP) was assured

by it. And AHEC started the program of AHEC-RPP as the guideline of The Green Procurement Law in Japan from January, 2009. In export to Japan, AHEC members who take part in this program stamp the shipping documents with a stamp to show the legality (AHEC-RPP). The member company number is engraved into the stamp. Of course the list of members participating in AHEC-RPP is submitted to Japanese Government (Forestry Agency of MAFF) and organizations concerned.

#### **IV. Future tasks and expectations of the Japanese market**

AHEC Japan Office has been developing Hang Tag Promotion since 2000, and is providing information of the good forest managements of American hardwood, the stable supply, and the legality to Japanese consumers with about forty Japanese furniture and interior materials manufacturers. And the logo mark of AHEC-RPP is mentioned in the tools (tag, flier and POP stand) of Hang Tag Promotion. On the other hand, AHEC thinks that the structure of The Green Procurement Law in Japan is extremely reasonable judging from cost performance and hopes it will develop worldwide in the future.