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Japan

Solid Wood Products

Domestic Producers Evaluate Quality Labeling for Product Differentiation

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Approved by:

Kevin Latner
U.S. Embassy

Prepared by:

Masaoki Nagahama

Report Highlights:

Following on the domestic agricultural producer's marketing success of putting the face of the farmer on domestic products, Zenmokuren (the Japan federation of Wood Industry Associations) has established a task force to evaluate the use of a product- and quality-labeling program to promote domestically produced wood products, according to the Japan Forest Products Journal (4 Feb 2004).

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Over the past 5 years, farm products, from asparagus to port, prominently display domestic producer and manufacturer information, often including photos of the face of the farmer. Consumers often feel more confident about buying products labeled as such.

Responding to the success of these programs, Zenmokuren formed an expert task force of industry representatives from wood distribution and manufacturing, and non-profit organizations and consumers, according to the Japan Forest Products Journal (4 Feb 2004). The task force met for the first times in November 2003 and January 2003.

At the next meeting, scheduled for March 2003, the task force is expected to come up with a recommendation for specific actions, including the establishment of a special institution to monitor industry-wide implementation of this wood–product-labeling program.

Relevant information to be included on the label includes the name of the wood species, level of processing (e.g., solid wood, plywood, laminated wood), volatile organic compound emission levels, and other product data. The program is intended to integrate features from other existing programs, including voluntary formaldehyde emission labeling under the Japan Agricultural Standard (JAS) and promotional campaigns run by Japanese local government and industry. Products where visual identification of the raw material is difficult, such as particleboard and medium density fiberboard, will probably be excluded from the program.

End of Report.