



USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

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Japan

Solid Wood Products

February Housing Starts Up Again

2004

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Report Highlights:

Housing starts increased in January and February to 173,747, up 4.6% from the previous year. Wood framed housing starts were up 3.2% while the 2x4 construction sector was up 10.3% for the same period.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Tokyo [JA1]
[JA]

Japanese housing starts increased again in February, up 1.9% from the same month the previous year to 84,950. Year-to-date starts through February were 173,747 units, up 4.6% from the previous year.

Critical for the wood products sector, overall wood framed housing starts in January and February were up 3.2% from the same period the previous year, and up 10.3% for 2x4 construction.

The seasonally adjusted annual housing starts for 2004 is an estimated 1,173,000 units, up 12,917 units from the previous year.

As shown below, spec houses continued to lead the growth.

Japanese Housing Starts - Update through February, 2004 (Units)				
Sector	February, 2004	% Change (04/03)	Jan.-Feb. 2004	% Change (04/03)
Total Starts	84,950	+ 1.9%	173,747	+ 4.6%
-Custom housing	25,081	- 3.3%	48,752	- 1.3%
-Rental housing	32,157	+ 3.2%	67,195	+ 7.0%
-Corporate housing	572	- 45.1 %	1,200	- 40.8%
-Built-for-sale	27,140	+ 7.4 %	56,600	+ 8.9%
Wood-Framed	37,403	+ 3.2 %	72,988	+ 3.4%
Wood Share (%)	44.0 %	+ 0.5 points	42.0%	- 0.5 points
By Framing Method				
-Condominiums	16,096	+ 2.3 %	34,911	+ 4.2%
-Prefab. Housing (Wood-framed)	11,128 (23,204)	- 4.4% (- 2.0 %)	24,942 (3,799)	- 2.5% (- 0.6%)
2x4 Wood-framed	5,684	+ 10.3%	11,584	+ 12.2%
By Floor Space (1,000 square meters)				
All Housing Starts	7,611	+ 0.7 %	15,151	+ 2.8%
Wood-Framed	3,964	+ 1.6 %	7,624	+ 3.6%
Wood Share (%)	52.1%	+ 4.0 points	50.3%	+ 0.4 points

(Source: Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport)

End of Report