



HT NEWS



August 25, 2009

PUBLIC MEETINGS; WPM USED IN DOMESTIC COMMERCE

NOTICE FROM THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

SUMMARY: This is a notice to inform the public of four upcoming meetings to discuss mitigation measures that could be applied to wood packaging material (e.g., crates, dunnage, wooden spools, pallets, packing blocks) used in domestic commerce to decrease the risk of the artificial spread of plant pests such as the emerald ash borer and the Asian longhorned beetle. These and other plant pests that could be transported interstate by wood packaging material pose a serious threat to U.S. agriculture and to natural, cultivated, and urban forests.

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| Washington, DC | 8/27/09 | Jefferson Auditorium, USDA S. Bldg, 1400 Independence Ave, SW. |
| Portland, OR | 9/02/09 | The Embassy Suites Hotel, 319 SW Pine Street |
| Houston, TX | 9/15/09 | The Crowne Plaza Houston I-10 West, 14703 Park Row |
| Grand Rapids, MI | 9/29/09 | The Amway Grand Plaza Hotel, 187 Monroe Avenue, NW. |

Corrected Date

The meetings in each location will be held from 9 a.m. to noon. Registration will be from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. for each meeting.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Paul Chaloux, National Emerald Ash Borer Program Manager, PPQ, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 137, Riverdale, MD 20737-1236; (301) 734-0917.

As part of its ongoing efforts to safeguard plant health, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is considering options for strengthening our response to the risks of the artificial spread of plant pests such as the pine shoot beetle *Tomicus piniperda* (Scolytidae) and the Asian longhorned beetle *Anaplophora glabripennis* (Cerambycidae) that are associated with the interstate movement of wood packaging material (WPM).

In order to provide individuals and organizations an opportunity to discuss options for strengthening our response to the risks associated with the interstate movement of WPM, the potential impacts of increased use of alternative packaging materials, the environmental issues relating to these options, and any other topics of concern, we plan to hold several public meetings. Our goal is to gather feedback and input from a wide range of stakeholders to assist us in making an informed decision regarding our objectives and direction in relation to the interstate movement of WPM. Topics for discussion at each meeting will include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following:

Pest risks: What is the magnitude of the pest risks associated with WPM moving interstate? What treatments or other measures would be effective in reducing pest risks associated with WPM moving interstate and to what degree would these risks be reduced by these approaches?

Compliance: Would responsibility lie with the manufacturer, end user, shipper, or elsewhere for ensuring that WPM meets any standards that might be developed? How could APHIS best monitor compliance with any such standards? If treatment of some kind were required for all WPM moving interstate, would a phase-in period be required, and if so, how long should this period last?

Alternative materials: To what extent could alternative packing materials (processed wood packaging materials, plastic packing materials, or other alternatives) be substituted for WPM in interstate commerce? What would the environmental, economic, and other impacts be of any such substitution?

Environmental impacts: What would the environmental impacts be if treatment or other measures were required for WPM moving interstate?

Cost: What would the economic impacts be if treatment or other measures were required for WPM moving interstate?

For more information, contact:

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