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## **U.S. Softwood Lumber Exports Double in Five Years After Promotional Push**

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Export sales of American softwood lumber nearly doubled in the past five years, reaching \$1.1 billion and the highest level in 16 years, reports the Southern Forest Products Association (SFPA). Meanwhile, exports of pressure-treated lumber, a key value-added item promoted by the association, reached an all-time sales record of \$79 million in 2013. Exports have jumped sharply to regions targeted by the association's international market development efforts, and are continuing to rise this year.

"There's no doubt that global demand for U.S. softwood lumber is on the rise, and there's an undeniable link between rising demand and our promotional efforts," says Richard Kleiner, SFPA's senior director of international markets.

SFPA partners with the Southeastern Lumber Manufacturers Association (SLMA) to unite the common export objectives of Southern Pine producers under the promotional banner of the Southern Pine Council (SPC). More than 60% of Southern Pine lumber products are manufactured by these SPC sawmills.

For more than 30 years, SFPA has leveraged USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) grants to promote Southern Pine lumber exports. FAS-administered grants, including both the Foreign Market Development (FMD) and Market Access Program (MAP), allowing SFPA to reach emerging markets that were untapped until recently.

"Many SPC operations are small to medium enterprises, many family-owned mills," Kleiner notes. "FMD and MAP funds give these independent firms assistance needed to access new export markets," he adds.

On a cost share basis, MAP and FMD funding helps sponsor trade show exhibits and trade missions aimed at lumber importers, distributors and design-build professionals in key export markets. SFPA reports that companies participating in its FMD- and MAP-funded missions last year exported \$43 million in Southern Pine lumber as a direct result of sales leads and contacts obtained at events around the globe.



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As a return on investment, this equates to a \$42 to \$1 yield - for every federal dollar spent assisting these businesses at developing export markets for Southern Pine, the U.S. exported \$42. This strong return is consistent with an independent study conducted for USDA that found that between 2002 and 2009, for every additional \$1 expended by government and industry on market development, U.S. food and agricultural exports increased by \$35.

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