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Advancing the Southern Pine lumber industry since 1915

Pacific Rim: Opportunities for Southern Pine

Exports of Southern Pine lumber to four countries in the Pacific Rim show promise, according to assessments of four emerging markets: Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines. Recently, SFPA’s international consultant Jerry Hingle led research teams to study the potential for U.S. softwood exports to the region. Field research included in-country interviews with timber trade association executives, traders and construction design professionals. Across the region, interest was expressed in partnering with the U.S. on procuring and specifying U.S. softwoods.

Resource limitations, whether illegal logging or logging restrictions, have forced the countries to seek alternative sources of supply. Substantial growth in imports of treated lumber has been recorded over the last five years, growing ten-fold in Malaysia alone. U.S. softwood exports to Thailand have grown twenty-fold since 2009 and Thai builders are increasingly turning to wood-frame construction for the country’s growing real estate market. Furniture along with pallets and crates are other applications where U.S. softwoods can meet demand and challenge imports from Canada and New Zealand.

“This region definitely holds potential for the U.S. industry, but only if the U.S. industry provides the technical assistance needed to enable traders and specifiers to choose and apply U.S. materials,” Jerry noted. “With U.S. lumber largely unknown in some of these markets, technical training on U.S. lumber sizes, grades and preservative treatments is needed to pave the way to market growth,” he added.

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