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PENN STATE NEWS

Technology that destroys pests in wood moves closer to commercialization

Developed by researchers at Penn State, the method uses dielectric heating and radio frequency to treat products such as wood pallets

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UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. — A technology that uses dielectric heating and radio frequency energy to destroy destructive pests lurking within wood products is closer to reaching the marketplace after a recent commercial trial at Penn State’s University Park campus.

The Dec. 17 demonstration, which was observed by regulatory and wood products industry professionals from the U.S. and Canada, validated the effectiveness and cost efficiency of the radio frequency, or RF, technology for pallet sanitation.

The treatment offers enhanced ability to terminate wood insect and nematode pests compared to conventional heat practices, noted Mark Gagnon, Harbaugh Entrepreneur and Innovation Faculty Scholar in the [College of Agricultural Sciences](#).

“This innovation has the potential to be transformative in required international trade wood-sanitation treatment,” said Gagnon, who has been instrumental in the [Entrepreneurship and Innovation Program](#) since its inception, encouraging entrepreneurship across the college.

“RF treatment is more efficient and uses fewer resources than conventional kilns and chemical drying methods, and that is not only better for a company’s bottom line, but it is also better for the environment.”

Developed by Penn State scientists John Janowiak, professor of wood products engineering, processing and manufacturing, and Kelli Hoover, professor of entomology, the patent-pending, wood-treatment system heats wood in a unique configuration by using electromagnetic wave penetration, similar to that of a microwave oven.

Full Story: <https://news.psu.edu/story/604992/2020/01/21/impact/technology-destroys-pests-wood-moves-closer-commercialization>

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