

Global Timber and Wood Products Market Update

- a news brief from Wood Resources International LLC

Lumber imports to China were close to record high in April; Russia, Sweden and Finland increased shipments the most, reports the Wood Resource Quarterly

In April, the import volume of softwood lumber by China reached its second highest level on record as reported by the Wood Resource Quarterly. Importation during the first four months this year was 2.1 percent higher than in the same period last year, with Russian sawmills increasing their shipments by over 13 percent. Import prices in April were at their lowest level since 2012.

Seattle, USA. Demand for imported softwood lumber in China sky-rocked this spring after a slow period from August 2014 to March 2015. In February, import volumes were down to 860,000 m³ for the month, a two-year low. In just two months, shipments doubled to 1.7 million m³ for the month of April, the second highest monthly import volume on record. Year-to-date import volumes were 2.1 percent higher this year than during the same period in 2014, with Russian shipments having increased 13 percent, as reported in the latest issue of the Wood Resource Quarterly (www.woodprices.com).

Russia's share of total softwood lumber imports to China has climbed steadily the past four years from 36 percent in 2011 to approximately 47 percent for the first four months of 2015. Most of the other major lumber-supplying countries to China have reduced their shipments this year, specifically the US (-41%), Canada (-3%) and Chile (-3%).

Lumber volumes from the Nordic countries have gone up dramatically in early 2015. Although this region supplies only four percent of the total import volume, it is still noteworthy that shipments from Finland and Sweden were up by 52 percent and 32 percent respectively, year-over-year. Since these two countries supply softwood lumber with some of the highest average import values (about \$260/m³ CIF) of all countries selling lumber to China, it is an indication that demand for higher quality wood is in increasing demand, reports WRQ. Sweden exports mainly spruce lumber to China with about 20% being planed wood. A majority of Finnish lumber is also spruce, with the remaining volume being pine.

Overall, lumber import prices to China have trended downward in 2015 with the April average prices reaching their lowest level since late 2012. Prices for Nordic lumber have fallen steeper than those for lumber from other major supplying countries. Russian lumber (mostly pine) continues to be the lower value wood, while the average cost for lumber from the Nordic countries, Chile and New Zealand currently is almost twice as high.

Global lumber, sawlog and pulpwood market reporting is included in the 52-page quarterly publication Wood Resource Quarterly (WRQ). The report, which was established in 1988 and has subscribers in over 30 countries, tracks sawlog, pulpwood, lumber and pellet prices, trade

*and market developments in most key regions around the world. **To subscribe to the WRQ,** please go to www.woodprices.com*

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