



PWPA Pays Courtesy to Cong. Matugas

SFMA Bill to be Prioritized

The Philippine Wood Producers Association (PWPA) led by its President Antonio Olizon made its traditional courtesy call to the new Lower House's Chairman of the Committee on Natural Resources, Congressman Franciso Matugas on October 12, 2010 at his office at the House of Representatives, Batasan, Quezon City.

The courtesy call, arranged by VP-Director Evaristo Narvaez, Jr., was very cordial as Cong. Matugas representing a district in Surigao del Norte and is familiar with the wood operations of the PWPA members in Caraga Region.

Cong. Matugas informed the PWPA delegation the Lower House of the present (15th) Congress approved an omnibus bill that all bills that have been passed by the Lower House and endorsed to the Senate during the last Congress were deemed passed by it, including the Sustainable Forest Management Act (SFMA) bill. Natural Resources Committee Secretary (Comsec) Raul Terso said the SFM was not a part of the omnibus bill as it was assigned to the Special Committee of the House. However, Cong. Matugas said the SFM bill will be prioritized by his Committee when the Congress resumes its session in November, 2010. He assured the PWPA that his timetable

for the House to have the SFM bill endorsed to the Senate by December, 2010.

The PWPA said that it will also meet with the Senate's Committee on Environment and Natural Resources to request it to have the SFM bill facilitated for approval.

The PWPA delegation also met with Cong. Rufus Rodriguez, the author of the SFMA bill in the last and present Congress, who assured the PWPA that he will help sponsor the approval of the SFM bill by the Natural Resources Committee when it conducts its public hearing in November 2010.

With President Olizon and VP-director Narvaez, Jr. During the courtesy call were Directors Alfonso Keh, Jr., Aristeo Puyat and Alex Ong, Executive Director L. D. Angeles, Forestry and Environment (F&E) Adviser Jose Lorenzo and F&E Coordinator Maila Vasquez.



PWPA Made Courtesy Call to NCIP Chair



The Philippine Wood Producers Association (PWPA) led by its President Antonio Olizon made its traditional courtesy call to the new National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) Chairman Roque Agton, Jr. on October 13, 2010 at his office in Quezon City.

Chair Agton, Jr. welcomed PWPA delegation as he expressed his intimacy with the wood industry, having been himself, in the past, a _____ in log processing plant

in Davao.

President Olizon apprised the NCIP chair on some problems the members of the PWPA are encountering in securing the Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) which is very long and tedious, and the royalty share of the IPs, which are difficult to meet.

On improving the FPIC process and IP royalty, PWPA suggested some ways to cut short the FPIC process and some standards on IP royalty and benefits that maybe negotiated fairly.

Chair Agton said he plans to review the FPIC process for different industries and is just waiting for the funding for its review.

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PWPA Makes Courtesy to Commissioner Alvarez

The Philippine Wood Producers Association (PWPA) led by its Chairman Fernando Lu and President Antonio Olizon made a courtesy call to Bureau of Customs Commissioner Angelito Alvarez last September 24, 2010 at his office in Port Area, Manila. The call provided the opportunity for PWPA to bring up the issue on the non-collection of export tax on the falcata logs being exported.

The PWPA delegation was first met by the Chief of Staff of Commissioner, Ms. Adelina Molina to whom ED L. D. Angeles introduced the delegation members, and the PWPA as an association as he proceeded to inform her about: 1) the on-going exportation of small diameter falcata logs in container vans at the Ports of Davao City and Cagayan de Oro City to China without export tax or duty being collected from as provided for under the Customs and Tariff Code; 2) the buying by trader exporters from small tree farmers of falcata logs below prevailing market prices of US\$25 vs US\$70-75/cu m, the basis for the collection of the 20% duty; and 3) the possible inclusion of export banned log species as there are no more inspection being done of the container vans.

Commissioner Alvarez, who came in late, said he noted the report of the PWPA which was earlier submitted to him. He said the potential revenue from such exports, the BOC will now have the container vans of falcata logs inspected and the export duty properly assessed and collected. He said he has already instructed his people in Cagayan de Oro and Davao ports to check on the exportation of falcata logs. He said that he will do everything necessary so proper inspection and duty will be made as BOC is intensifying the generation of revenues needed by the present Administration.

He said only the collection of the taxes is the responsibility of BOC, while the issue on dwindling log supply will be with the DENR's. He suggested that maybe the wood industry adopts hedging strategy so that small tree farmers will not sell early their trees to trader exporters; thus, ensure the future supply of proper sizes of logs to the mills.

With PWPA Chairman Lu and President Olizon are EVP Alfonso Keh, Jr., Executive Director L. D. Angeles, FEC Maila Vasquez, IC Ricardo Patawaran, Mr. Jacinto Ngo of Agusan Plywood and Ms. Sylvia Cortes of Alsons.

Symposium Explore African Oil Palm as a Potential Plantation Crop

The Philippine Wood Producers Association (PWPA), the Department of Environment and Natural Resources Forest Management Bureau (DENR/FMB) and the University of the Philippines at Los Banos College of Forestry and Natural Resources Forest Development Center (UPLBCFNR/FDC) co-sponsored a symposium on "The Potential of African Oil Palm (*Elaeis guineensis* Jacq.) as a Plantation Crop in Forestland" last October 19, 2010 at the AIM Conference Center Manila, Makati City.

The symposium discussed and explored the economic and environmental potential of the African oil palm as an additional plantation crop in that maybe developed in the forestland, including areas with IFMA and SIFMA.

Forester Renato de Rueda, the president of the Society of Filipino Foresters, the masters of the ceremony and moderator of the Symposium, introduced the participants

from the DENR's FMB and Ecosystems Research Development Bureau, the FDC and the Forest Products Research and Development Institute of the Department of Science and Technology and the PWPA .

PWPA President Olizon welcomed the participants as he hoped the Symposium on African oil palm, as a plantation crop in forestland, like in Malaysia and Indonesia, (_____ palm oil is not all about the environment; but is also about commerce and country's economy) would be a vehicle to jump-start a new industry in the Philippines that can stamp out poverty among forest and upland dwellers.

Different papers on the environmental, social and economic potential of African oil palm were presented by experts as follows:

- African Oil Palm as Environmental and Climate Adapting/ Mitigating Plantation Crop by Dr. Florencia B. Pulhin,

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Symposium Explore...

University Researcher, UPLBCFNR – FDC;

- Current and Emerging Uses of, and Markets for, the Products and By-Products of African Oil Palm by Dr. Rico J. Cabangon, OIC, Material Science Division, FPRDI, DOST;
- African Oil Palm Plantation: Its Financial Viability and Socio-economic Impacts on Rural Upland Population by Mr. Antonio P. Avelino, President, SODACO, Inc.;
- Suitability of Developing African Oil Palm Plantation in Certain Appropriate Areas in Forestland by Forester Samson F. Monton, Operations Manager, Agusan Plantations, Inc.;
- Policy Parameters for the Use of Forestland for African Oil Palm Plantation Development by Forester Nonito M. Tamayo, Chief, Forest Land Use Division, FMB, DENR (See related stories on pp. 4-5)

Forester de Rueda, in concluding the Symposium praised it as one of the most productive he has attended:

as the speakers are experts in their own rights and their topics were exhaustively presented.

He echoed the hope of President Olizon that recommendations could be translated on the ground, by first revisiting the existing policy with regards to agroforestry, so that the present Administration would be able to address the issues of poverty and increasing population, climate change and forest degradation, as well as the renewable energy vs. fossil fuel.

In closing the Symposium, FDC Director Antonio Carandang affirmed the Symposium is indeed very productive but there is yet works to be done to follow-up the gains of the Symposium like pushing for the policy directions that were highlighted so that a more economically responsive and environmentally sound oil palm industry would develop in the Philippines.

All About African Oil Palm...

African Oil Palm as Environmental and Climate Adapting/Mitigating Plantation Crop

Dr. Florencia B. Pulhin, University Researcher of the UPLBCFNR – FDC, said that oil palm has the capability to mitigate climate change because:

Palm oil mill effluent, which contains methane, can be a source of biogas [Methane from oil palm effluent can also be provide energy for mills (Yacob *et al* 2006)]

Fiber and shell can be sources of fuel [Currently, fiber and shell are used in the oil mill to generate electricity

(Yussof 2006)]

Possible CDM projects: A/R, methane capture and fuel switching

She added that oil palm has means for climate adaptation:

Decomposition of litterfall increases soil porosity, reduces surface runoff and increases soil cover leading to increased water infiltration and retention which can reduce moisture stress during low rainfall.

Evapotranspiration rate is higher than other cash crops; thus, can maintain

aerated soil condition by pumping excess water out of the soil more rapidly than other production systems.

Deep root systems are able to explore a larger soil volume for water and nutrients, which help the plant during drought condition.

Crop produced is of higher economic value than annual crops; thus, not vulnerable to income risks associated with climatic variability.

Oil palm plantation is a significant sink of carbon.

Current and Emerging Uses of, and Markets for, the Products and By-Products of African Oil Palm

Dr. Rico J. Cabangon, OIC, Material Science Division, FPRDI, DOST, started off with the botanical descriptions of oil palm and its products and by-products.

He said palm oil is used for food (90%) and for biodiesel. The palm kernel oil,

on the other hand, is used for confectionery (Malaysia) and blended with palm olein for local consumption (Indonesia). He added it is an alternative to coconut oil in manufacturing high quality soap and as a source of short and medium chain fatty acids used as intermediated for the manu-

facture of certain chemicals for multiple uses like surface active ingredients, plastics, lubricants and cosmetics.

Other uses he said are as liniment for rheumatism and an excellent poultice

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All About African Oil Palm...

Current and Emerging Uses ...

(Continued from page 3)

and vulnerary applied to wounds while its roots are used as diuretic and fresh sap as laxative.

He mentioned the uses of the by-products as:

Palm oil mill effluent for biogas as renewable electricity and, for the manufacture of cellulosic ethanol, biohydrogen, and bioplastic

Waste fiber from fruit bunches as raw material for MDF plant (in Malaysia, there is MDF plant with a daily production capacity of 55 m³) and the harvested old trunks can be used for the manufacture of panel products such as particleboard, CBBs and MDF

Palm fronds for household heating/

cooking or mulching in plantations and as feeds for livestock

Kernel meal for dairy cattle feed, and kernel cake for adhesive

Male inflorescence is processed as wine in Africa.

He also discussed about the supply, demand and the global palm oil prices. He said that China and India are the world's largest importer of palm oil (29% of global consumption) followed by the European Union. He added that the European market prefers palm oil over traditional "tallow" for personal care products and its demand is increasing which can affect the prices of other vegetable oils.

He said that the high yield of oil palm

and the relatively cheap price, high oxidative stability of its refined oil products, and the high level of anti-oxidant property its oil have paved the way for its wide use by commercial food, personal care products and biofuels industries. He concluded food versus fuel will be an issue since palm oil is the cheapest food oil in SEA and that the production for biofuel may be linked to price of palm oil to rising fuel prices.

He cautioned, however, that the use of palm oil should come from sustainable sources and that the establishment of the oil palm plantations should have no significant effect on the environment. He suggested there should be R&D on high value products for biomass.

African Oil Palm Plantation: Its Financial Viability and Socio-economic Impacts on Rural Upland Population



Mr. Antonio P. Avelino, President, SODACO, Inc., in highlighting the socio-economic viability of African oil palm used two models of its development and harvest: the CARAGA, built out from the experiences of the Filipinas Palmoil Plantations, Inc. and Bayugan, based on actual experiences of SODACO in Agusan del Sur, also in Caraga.

The CARAGA model incurring a cost /hectare 18% higher than Bayugan model, both spread over 3 years; yet the 5th year harvest on yield of fresh fruit bunches of the latter (Bayugan) was 85% higher than the former (Caraga).

	Bayugan Model (Kgs Fresh Fruit Bunch)	Caraga Model (Kgs Fresh Fruit Bunch)
Year 3	8,711 (2008)	nil
Year 4	16,839 (2009)	6,000
Year 5	18,519 (2010)*	10,000

* conservative estimate for 2010 based on production of 1,000MT.

He said there are encouraging signs of healthy returns on investment from the optimal management of the land, capital and technology, the community and the _____ stand to benefit from the positive spillovers of income generation (direct and indirect employment), global warming alleviation, soil conservation and the palm oil's industry's multiple non-food applications.

He concluded that the forestry sector is in an excellent position to address the issue of rural poverty for in a landscape where livelihood sources are sparse and unstable, oil palm presents a viable option for creating pockets of self-sufficiency and drawing more rural dwellers into the economic mainstream and making the country a more inclusive society.

Suitability of Developing African Oil Palm Plantation in Certain Appropriate Areas in Forestland

Forester Samson F. Monton, Operations Manager, Agusan Plantations, Inc., provided guides on where African oil palm can be successfully developed:

Altitude/latitude. Not more than 200 meters above sea level and preferably within the equatorial tropics at 10° N to 10° S from the equator.

Ideal Climatic Conditions:

Mean Temperature	: 28°C
Sunshine	: 5.5 Hours Per Day
Mean Wind Speed	: 15 kph
Relative Humidity	: 75-85%
Annual Rainfall	: 2,000-3500 mm
Minimum Monthly Rainfall	: 130mm

Suitability of Steep areas. With proper safeguards, as terracing with leguminous cover crops, lands with less than

40° slope can still be developed for oil palms. In many cases, the economic returns from terrace-planted palm proved higher than in most plantations at lowlands.

Yield Coefficients Influenced By Environmental Factors. Level of frond production; sex ratio of inflorescences; extent of floral abortion; degree of survival after anthesis; and bunch weight.

Effects On Yields Of Moisture Deficits. Abortion of inflorescences about four months to anthesis; physiological stress at the time of sex determination resulting to higher number of male inflorescences; abortion of newly-developed inflorescences and death of developing bunches; and reduction of size of bunches produced 3 years after experiencing moisture deficit.

He added that barring limitations posed by rough topography and low temperature associated with altitude, most of the inadequately-stocked logged-over areas and openlands are good candidates for oil palm establishment.

Policy Parameters for the Use of Forestland for African Oil Palm Plantation Development

Forester Nonito M. Tamayo, Chief, Forest Land Use Division, FMB, DENR, started-off with the recitation of tenure instruments available in the country. He said the biggest area covered by the tenure was the CBFMA (1.6 M ha), followed by IFMA (0.767 M ha) and the TLA (0.325 M ha).

He then cited the provision of the 1987 Constitution where the State may enter into co-production, joint venture, or production-sharing agreements in the exploration, development, and utilization of natural resources, such as the forest, with Filipino citizens, or corporations or associations at least 60 per cent of whose capital is owned by such citizens.

He explained the different DENR guidelines pertaining to forestland uses, such as the DENR Memo Circular 2004-12 (identification of forest area for the establishment of African oil palm), DAO 99-53 (IFMA guidelines), DAO 2004-30

(SIFMA guidelines) and DAO 2005-25 (Upland Agroforestry Program).

He cited the area limitation of establishing African oil palm in an area covered by IFMA where only 10% of the entire IFMA area is allowed therefor; while in areas under CBFM and Upland Agroforestry, the whole area can be planted with oil palm.

He concluded that










There are, for every client, different tenure options and management objectives in public forestlands;

Forestlands may be devoted to African oil palm plantation given the proper tenure and mixing of crops as required under said tenure;

The best option for African oil palm plantation development in public forestland is through the Upland Agroforestry Program.

Elected during the Meeting of the Board of Directors on September 28, 2010, following the PWPA Annual General Assembly of Members on _____ election of the directors of the Board

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Glimpses from Matimco's A Wooden Affair

Matimco, a regular Member of the PWPA, is represented by Mr. Charlie H. Liu, director of the Board



The Truss-Wood House Grand Launch, September 10, 2010, Frontera Verde, Pasig City



Glimpses during the Symposium on African Oil Palm



Wood: So good, so misunderstood

by Julie Alegre



The TrussWood House is Matimco's newest showroom and the first structure to feature all of its superior product lines.

MANILA, Philippines - Wood is the most misunderstood construction material," says Charlie H. Liu, chief executive officer of Matimco Incorporated. Increasing deforestation worldwide, which has resulted in excessive amounts of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, has been blamed for causing climate change. The popular belief is that cutting trees is bad for the environment.

"But it's all about responsible forest management," Liu remarks. Wood used as construction material can actually help fight climate change. Processing timber uses less energy, over 25 percent less than that required to process other construction materials such as cement or steel. "It uses little energy to harvest, process, and construct," Liu goes on to explain. Wood is renewable and recyclable. In fact, it is the only renewable construction material.

Wood stores carbon. It is computed that growing trees absorb one kilogram of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere for every cubic meter of growth. The carbon is trapped in the trees and the wood products from the trees, which will continue to lock in the carbon for all of its life. "One half of the weight of the wooden chair you are sitting on is made up of carbon," Liu points out.

"But trees absorb carbon only

during its growing years until it reaches maturity, which is about half of the tree's life. That's when you can harvest the timber so it can give way to new trees," Liu says. "The focus is on planting timber species and away from exotic hardwood products."

The important thing is to replant more trees and to use properly sourced wood products coming only from tree plantations and not from natural forests. Given this, wood may very well be the greenest construction material on the market.

The elegant beauty and warmth of wood makes it an attractive choice for homeowners. Matwood, Matimco's flagship brand, has given life to countless design concepts since it was introduced 10 years ago as the first branded wood in the country. Its product line includes moldings, doors, jambs, framings, stair components, and paneling. With its 10-year warranty, you are assured of Matwood's superior kiln-dried quality and proven-safest wood treatment technology using the double-vacuum treatment process with light organic solvent preservative Solignum, which allows a deeper penetration of the preservative in the wood than the traditional technique of brushing or dipping. Recently, it launched its pre-stained line and also introduced a new set of door designs, classic floors, and a cabinet line.

Another Matimco brand, PCW, is engineered wood that uses "advanced wood technology, state-of-the-art processes and innovation, making it easy to use, durable, and affordable," says Matimco marketing director Billy Arrienda. "The products are straight and consistent in size compared to conventional solid products, and their strength is assured and proven accurate by test results."

PCW products include frames, moldings, doors, jambs, handrails, fascia boards, and cabinet doors.

Weatherwood, Matimco's "outdoor lifestyle wood" is "100-percent architectural authentic natural timber of the best *Pinus radiata* stocks sourced only from sustainably managed tree farms around the world, and superiorly treated to ensure long-term wood protection intended for outdoor designs." Arrienda adds, "It has a 25-year warranty against the top three common wood enemies: termites, wood borers, and fungal decay."

Weatherwood is lightweight, easy to install, DIY, with an easy snap-on plastic base. There is no need to paint over it since it is pre-coated with an anti-UV decorative oil stain. You can extend your living space by using Weatherwood as deck flooring. It is also best for trellises, arches, and gazebos.

The newest brand of Matimco is Trusswood, which is a "tropic-friendly alternative to home building." Combining the versatility of timber and the strength of steel, this new technology from the west is suitable for two-story designs, steep-sloping sites, seaside estates, and poor foundation conditions. The Trusswood prefabricated building systems include a roof truss system, floor truss system, and wall frame system.

Trusswood building is strong, easy, and fast. "Being an engineered



The impressive building uses TrussWood for the structural requirements, while Matwood, Weatherwood and PCW are used for all the finishings. (Continued on page 9)

Wood: So good...

(Continued from page 8)

solution from design to fabrication, Trusswood systems minimize unnecessary wastage of material associated with unplanned cuttings as the building components are cut to size, prefabricated and labeled upon delivery on-site," Arrienda explains. "Employing the most advanced software system, Trusswood's design program is the most powerful detailing and estimating software program in the prefabrication market today."

The very first Trusswood House was unveiled recently. Located in Pasig, it is Matimco's newest showroom and the first to use all of its product lines. Trusswood was used for the structural wood requirements, while Matwood, Weatherwood, and PCW were used for all the finishings. "The unique structure serves as proof of the superior capabilities of the Matimco

brands," Arrienda said.

From its humble beginnings in the early 1960s as a lumber dealer in Cebu and a small sawmill in Cagayan de Oro started by Charlie's father, Leo Lim Liu, today, Matimco and its affiliate companies run the largest wood-processing operations in the country, with over 300 employees producing more than 500 products. With a network of over 2,000 dealers nationwide, Matimco has the largest and most expansive timber distribution network in the country.

But it's not just business at Matimco. Even before CSR became fashionable, the company had already been practicing responsible citizenry. They have been supporting tree farms and reforestation projects such as the 500-hectare tree plantation in Morong, Bataan, as well as the 50-hectare reforestation project in upland Naga in

Cebu. They have 25 years to fund and manage the project. It takes 15 to 20 years before the first harvest. It's a long-term investment. "It's a legacy," Liu says.

Their success, Liu says, is anchored on innovation, resiliency, and corporate responsibility. It's the company culture. "You cannot survive without being good at something," Liu says. In the case of Matimco, it's wood. Their tagline says: "Matimco is wood; wood is Matimco."

"Cut my vein and sawdust will come out," Liu says.

* * *

For more information, visit www.matimco.com.

Source: *The Philippine Star*
October 02, 2010

PWPA Made Courtesy...

(Continued from page 1)

Chair Olizon cited some PWPA member's experiences on having fruitful negotiations of royalty with IPs and the PWPA will submit to the Commissioner its position paper therefor.

Chair Olizon related that the NCIP, the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines and the PWPA have had two productive fora in Angeles City and Tagaytay City, however, the recommendations therefrom were not practically implemented. He suggested a forum between the NCIP and the PWPA to which Chair Agton agreed but he suggested that it be done after NCIP's review of the FPIC process which by then can be presented to the forum.

PWPA: President Antonio C. Olizon, Director Alfonso C. Keh, Jr, Executive Director L. D. Angeles, FEC Maila R. Vasquez & FEA Jose A. Lorenzo.

DENR dismantles...

(Continued from page 11)

diameter while logs from natural forests are bigger and irregularly shaped at around 27 to 28 inches in diameter.

Vowing to "run after my people," Paje sought PWPA members' help in reviving the country's wood industry by dutifully abiding by the terms and conditions of their permits and staying within DENR's regulations.

Paje admonished the wood producers not to treat erring DENR people as "little tyrants," and asked PWPA leadership to likewise penalize erring PWPA members that are "not toeing the line." "This duty must be two-way," he said.

Last month, Paje issued Memorandum Order No. 9 banning the acceptance and processing of new applications for timber contracts seeking to cut trees inside natural forest.

In an e-mail note, PWPA president Antonio Olizon described the 59 percent drop as "a substantial decrease in the number of checkpoints," even as he suggested certain measures to ensure the effectiveness of the checkpoints' entry-exit system to track the arrival and departure of their wood products.

"Checkpoints should be equipped with official or registered log-books so every truck or towing details will be recorded and signed by them and can be audited by other DENR officials without tampering the records," Olizon noted, stressing that the operation of checkpoints should be placed under a system of check and balance that will look into their activities and records, preferably by a third party.

Source: <http://denr.gov.ph/>

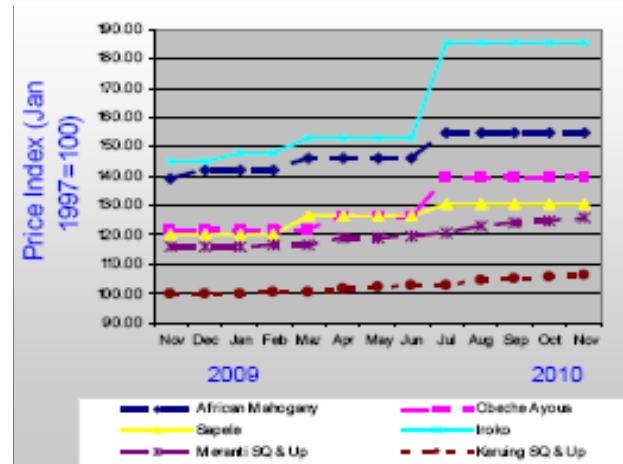
Snapshot of the Tropical Timber Market

Japanese timber industries against Trans Pacific Partnership

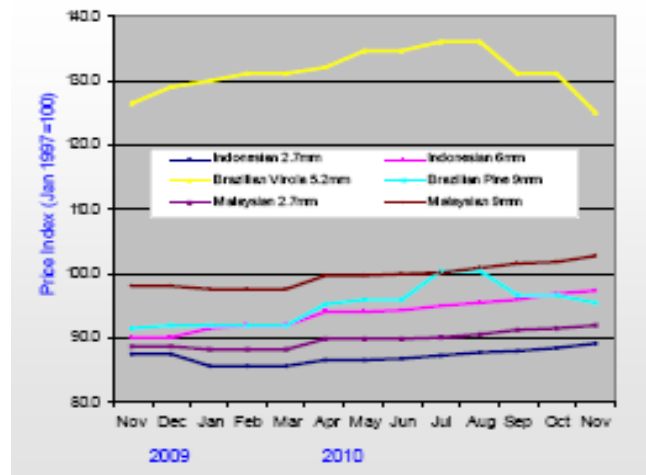
The Japanese government is currently negotiating on joining the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP), a free trade agreement between Singapore, New Zealand, Australia, Chile, Peru, Malaysia, Vietnam, Brunei and the USA. On 13-14 November 2010, Japan joined in the TPP negotiations as an observer during the APEC summit held in Yokohama Japan.

The National Council for Forest Products Trade Measure, consisting 22 forest and wood industry groups, voted against joining the TPP. The Council insists that liberalisation of the timber trade would have serious impacts on the domestic wood and timber product industry. In addition, the Council claims that the TPP would be against the Policy on Revitalisation of the Timber Sector in Japan aimed at promoting development and employment through increasing the use of domestic wood.

Tropical Log Price Trends

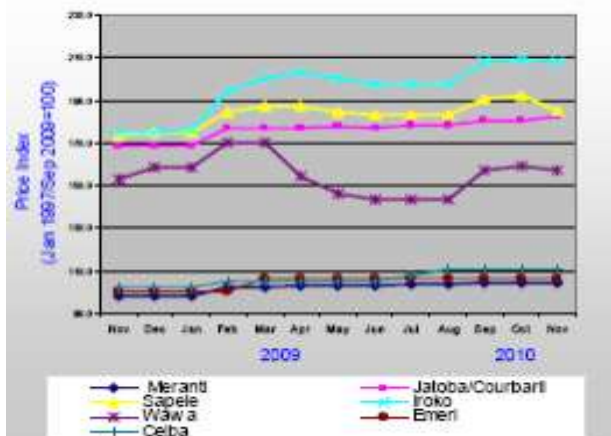


Tropical Plywood Price Trends



Source: Tropical Timber Market Report
Volume 15, Number 22, November 16-30, 2010

Tropical Sawnwood Price Trends



Average Plywood and Substitute Prices Survey in NCR

	Before (Aug. 17, 2010)	Now (Sept. 20, 2010)		Before (Aug. 17, 2010)	Now (Sept. 20, 2010)
3mm (1/8) plywood	205	215	18 mm (3/4) plyboard	821	825
4 mm (3/16) plywood	287	292	1/8 lawanit	218	215
5 mm (1/4) plywood ordinary	315	315	3/16 lawanit	305	307
5 mm (1/4) plywood marine	343	350	1/4 Hardiflex	405	404
10 mm (1/2) plywood	514	531	Gypsum Board	379	377
18 mm (3/4) plywood ordinary	835	855			

Note: all pick-up prices inclusive of VAT retail prices

DENR dismantles “non-essential” checkpoints

Some 161 of 274 roadside checkpoints of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) have been abolished following a directive from DENR Secretary Ramon J. P. Paje to all his regional executive directors to assess which checkpoints will be most effective in catching undocumented timber.

The remaining 113 checkpoints represents a 59 percent drop of the total figure, or one percent short of the 60-percent that Paje has set when he ordered the regional offices to limit the number DENR checkpoints “according to the most strategic locations” and dismantle “non-essential” ones that were reportedly giving legitimate timber traders the “squeeze” to shell out grease money despite the proper documents presented for their cargo.

“The dismantling of non-critical checkpoints will give more muscle to internal and external control mechanism for monitoring the effectiveness and integrity of these checkpoints as this demonstrates this administration’s

resolve to take strict and prompt disciplinary measures to stop systemic corruption in the service,” Paje said.

Paje’s order was in response to complaints of timber firms that DENR personnel manning these checkpoints had been mulcting money from them despite permits presented during transport of legitimate timber products to sawmills and other wood processing plants (WPPs) in the country from tree plantations where most of the lumber sold in lumberyard are grown and harvested.

Many of the retained checkpoints are those in roads leading in and out of protected areas where cutting is banned while others are mobile or “unannounced” checkpoints that are set up on short notices based on spot reports or intelligence information provided by local police and military authorities and concerned civic groups.

The easing of checkpoints in non-critical areas is also a gesture of confidence-building Paje is extending to wood-based firms comprising the Philippine Wood Producers Association

(PWPA) which has been leading the call for the DENR to reexamine its forestry-related policies and regulations, especially on checkpoints.

Talking to PWPA members during its 59th general assembly last August, Paje, in his keynote speech, said: “I want to reduce the transaction cost,” referring to a report that some PWPA members are spending as much as P50,000 per month for their “checkpoint expenses.”

At the same time, he called upon the timber firms to install closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras in their wood processing facilities to prove they are not buying undocumented timber in exchange for his move to remove the non-critical checkpoints.

“With the CCTV cameras, we can also easily identify if they are processing illegally cut timber because natural forest logs are much bigger than those that were planted in plantations,” Paje said.

Plantation logs are round-shaped, measuring about 15 to 16 inches in

(Continued on page 9)

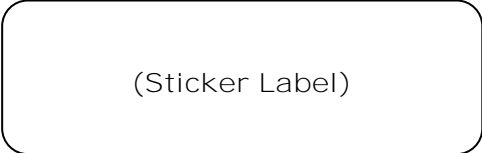
PWPA in Events

Date	Meetings/Events	PWPA Representatives
Sept. 2	FMB-PWPA Regular Consultative Meeting FMB Conference Room, Quezon City	President Antonio Olizon, ED Leonardo Angeles, FEA Jose Lorenzo, FEC Maila Vasquez, Mr. Florio Bunag of FGI group and Mr. Rudy Cabuay of SPLC
9	Meeting with China-ASEAN Secretariat Representatives PWPA Boardroom, Makati City	ED Angeles and FEC Vasquez
10	A Wooden Affair: The TrussWood House Grand Launch Frontera Verde, Pasig City	President Olizon, Directors Evaristo Narvaez, Jr. and Ramon Uy, Manager Regino Serafico, FEC Vasquez, SA Floren Andres and Coordinator Benjamin Berena
23	Launching of the Reusable Bag Campaign DENR Social Hall, Quezon City	FEC Vasquez
24	Meeting with Customs Commissioner Lito Alvarez Bureau of Customs, Port Area, Manila	Chair Fernando Lu, President Olizon, EVP Alfonso Keh, Jr., ED Angeles, FEC Vasquez, IC Ricardo Patawaran, Mr. Jacinto Ngo of Agusan Plywood and Ms. Sylvia Cortes of Alsons
28	PWPA Board Meeting PWPA Boardroom, Makati City	PWPA directors and officers
30	Pre-symposium meeting FMB Conference Room, Quezon City	ED Angeles, FEA Lorenzo, FEC Vasquez and Mr. Cabuay of SPLC
Oct. 12	Courtesy Call to Congressman Francisco Matugas Batasang Pambansa, Quezon City	President Olizon, EVP-Director Keh, Jr., VP-Directors Narvaez, Jr., Alex Ong and Aristeo Puyat, ED Angeles, FEA Lorenzo and FEC Vasquez

Date	Meetings/Events	PWPA Representatives
Oct. 13	Courtesy Call to NCIP Chairman Roque Agton, Jr., N. dela Merced Bldg. cor West Ave., Quezon City	President Olizon, EVP-Director Keh, Jr., ED Angeles, FEA Lorenzo and FEC Vasquez
15	Practical Guide Development for Forest Investment in the Philippines, FMB, DENR, Quezon City	ED Angeles
19	Symposium on the Potential of Africal Oil Palm (<i>Elaeis guineensis Jacq.</i>) as a Plantation Crop in Forestland, AIM, Makati City	Co-organized by Forest Management Bureau, UPLB Forest Development Center and the PWPA
21	EDNP General Assembly and Preparatory Meeting for Earth Day 2011 Celebration, DENR Social Hall, Quezon City	FEC Vasquez
28-29	Project Launching Workshop for the project: "Moving Forward in the Implementation of the non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forest in Liberia, Nicaragua and the Philippines: A Contribution to Reducing Deforestation and Forest Degradation." Sulo Hotel and FMB, Quezon City	ED Angeles and FEC Vasquez

Note: EVP – Executive VP; VP – Vice President; ED – Executive Director; Mgr.– Manager; FEC – Forestry & Environment Coordinator; IC – Industry Coordinator; FEA – Forestry & Environment Adviser; SA – Systems Analyst; PC - Plywood Council; SC - Steering Committee

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