



Timber Trade Federation



Press Release

Timber Trade Federation meet Chinese Producers To Promote Market for Legal and Sustainable Timber Products

Getting credible evidence on the origin of timber and timber products was a key message to Chinese plywood and flooring producers at a recent six day European Timber Trade Federation Road Show to Shanghai and Pizhou.

The Road Show, sponsored by the UK Departments for International Development (DFID) and Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), was designed to give Chinese producers a better understanding of the requirements of European markets. At the same time the visit allowed European and Chinese trade associations to discuss how better cooperation and knowledge transfer could help their respective members benefit from opportunities in the environmentally discriminating European arena.

At a series of factory visits and one to one meetings with European buyers, Chinese suppliers heard first-hand what environmental steps they needed to take to ensure market access and to gain better prices. These included ensuring that plywood face veneers sourced from Russia or tropical countries were, at the very least, coming from known sources. They were encouraged, by using such programmes as the Timber Trade Action Plan (TTAP), to obtain credible verification of the legality of the source; and ultimately progress towards sourcing certified sustainable timber. The Tropical Forest Trust (TFT) China team played a key role in organising the event and sharing their experience to date with legality verification in China.

Progressive Chinese companies were also able to demonstrate the significant steps they had taken to source their products from known legal sources. They also demonstrated the environmental qualities of plywood core material such as fast-

growing poplar and eucalyptus, now growing in vast quantities across the Chinese countryside.

John White, Chief Executive, Timber Trade Federation, said:

“The Chinese timber industry faces many challenges in meeting international market requirements, but new EU legislation and public and private sector purchasing policies mean that china must embrace change to meet demand. As a result of the road show we have established better communications with the Chinese trade associations and are continuing to discuss the environmental demands of the timber industry. Chinese imports are very important to the UK market and opening the dialogue now has paved the way for a long and successful partnership.”

Mr. Zhu Guang Qian, Chairman of China Timber Distribution Association, said:

““The road show event gave the Chinese timber industry an opportunity to demonstrate that some of enterprises are already on the right path by taking steps to ensure that the wood they use comes from legal sources. It is important to show the European market that some Chinese producers are concerned with sustainability, and taking actions to control our wood sourcing.”

Nigel Williams, Managing Director of Premier Forest Products, who attended the Road Show, said:

“As a significant buyer of Chinese plywood I was hugely impressed by the quality of the circa 100 individuals we met across the six days of the Road Show. They listened carefully to what we had to say and I am confident many will up their game to ensure that they can satisfy the requirements of the European market. Where Chinese suppliers can provide additional credible verification of environmental good practice, they will not only find improved market access, but also a willingness on the part of buyers to pay more for their products.”

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For further information please contact Vicky Fairclough or Laura Nye, Nexus Communications on 020 7052 8831.

NOTES TO EDITORS

The Road Show was held from 14th to 19th April 2008 in Shanghai and Pizhou, the principal manufacturing centre for plywood destined for the European market.

All presentations made during the course of the Road Show are available at www.timbertradeactionplan.info

The Road Show was supported by generous funding from the UK Department for International Development and the Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs.

The Road Show was attended by UK and Dutch trade representatives as well as a number of UK wood and wood products buyers, and around 100 Chinese companies and trade representatives.

The Tropical Forest Trust (TFT) played a key role in the organisation and facilitation of this event. Established in 1999, the TFT is a nonprofit international charity seeking to transform the international trade in tropical timber and timber products into a force for forest conservation. TFT manages the Timber Trade Action Plan (TTAP) on behalf of the Timber Trade Federation.

At the invitation of European companies and their producer country suppliers, TTAP carries out assessments of specific points in the wood supply chain of producers. It helps companies to identify potential weaknesses that could allow illegal timber to enter the supply chain and draw up action plans, suggesting solutions to these problems.

More information about the Tropical Forest Trust can be found at www.tropicalforesttrust.com

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