

Canada Weekly

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Wood research big business for non-profit Canadian organization

Research and development for the vast forest products industry in Canada and throughout the world requires work in more than a dozen scientific disciplines.

Forintek Canada Corporation draws upon more than 65 years of experience as the Canadian government wood products research agency, to create and develop new products and processes for the following industry sectors: sawmilling, plywood and wood composites, housing, furniture and secondary manufacturing, packaging, treating, wood chemicals and adhesives.

A private non-profit corporation since 1979, Forintek employs a staff of 250. Many of its scientists and engineers are renowned leaders in their fields. The team includes biologists, microbiologists, entomologists, chemists, physicists, engineers, machinists, electricians, statisticians and economists. In Forintek's Ottawa and

Vancouver laboratories, the combination of facilities and expertise provides the means for innovation in the multifaceted wood products industry.

A fundamental motivation in Forintek's research programs is optimum resource utilization. In Canada, as well as in many other countries with substantial forest resources, appropriate and economical means of utilization are essential to the industry's prosperity. Effective utilization must take into account the constraints imposed by the characteristics of the resource and the market. In Canada and abroad, Forintek has carried out laboratory and commercial studies relating to utilization. These have included resource evaluation, development of new products and manufacturing processes and product testing.

Buildings of sugar cane rind

Forintek recently undertook a project for the Canadian International Development Agency in Barbados. The company developed a process for making composite panels and lumber from sugar cane rind. Various panel and lumber products made in the laboratory and in plant trials were tested and evaluated. Also included in this project were the development of compatible systems for protection of the finished product against biodeterioration and the development of suitable surface coatings.

Forintek supervised the construction of two specially designed experimental houses in Barbados made entirely from sugar cane rind building materials. These houses have, so far, withstood the rigours of hurricane Alan without damage. By extension, Forintek researchers are excited about the application of composites technology to other fibrous resources including rice husks, peanut shells and bamboo.

Resource Evaluation

Forintek has carried out studies on the utilization of high density Canadian hard-

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Robert Baillargeon

Forintek's culture collection contains more than 2,000 micro-organisms used in wood protection and biotechnological research.



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