

In September 1992, Canada submitted to the EC "A Proposal to Safeguard the Forests of the Community against the Introduction of the Pinewood Nematode and its Vectors". The proposal was based on risk management related to species differentiation. Canadian data showed that not all coniferous lumber posed the same level of risk of transmission of PWN.

Based on a Canadian submission, the European Community has exempted all cedar shipments from its heat-treatment or kiln-drying requirement. Our technical data leads us to hope that we can obtain similar exemptions for other species such as hemlock.

The incidence of pinewood nematode is extremely low in Canada and there is no evidence of tree mortality resulting from it. However, Canada recognizes that lumber made from pine and species groupings including pines present the highest possibility of transmission of the pest. Industry has responded to mandatory requirements as set by the European Community and has agreed to heat-treat or kiln-dry all such shipments to the EC effective June 1, 1993. We had obtained a further, four-month derogation (June-October) from the treatment requirement for non-pine and non-cedar lumber, but this was revoked when UK inspectors found evidence of infestations of the insect vector in two shipments of Canadian lumber.

Following the EC's decision to revoke the derogation, discussions were held with industry and provincial representatives. The following action plan was agreed to and is being implemented:

1. The Prime Minister, the Honourable Perrin Beatty and myself raised the issue in separate discussions with our European counterparts on the margins of the G-7 Summit in Tokyo. Our common message was one of strong concern with the EC's decision, stressing the impact that it has on Canadian interests, and our belief that less restrictive means can be found to manage the problem. There were no commitments to immediate action, but EC ministers and officials at all levels have reiterated their continued willingness to examine further scientific evidence and adjust the system as necessary.