

existing international building technologies and materials, Japan will be urged to revise the Building Standards Law as it relates to test methods, criteria and related restrictions, and to adopt international codes, standards and practices.

Canada has in place a number of formal and informal connections with the Japanese government. Both joint work between Canadian and Japanese scientists (e.g. the Canada-Japan Research and Development Workshop) and formal bilateral meetings provide the opportunity to press for change. In 2003, Canada will host the Canada-Japan Housing Committee, which will provide the opportunity to demonstrate Canadian technologies and products, as well as the more open and public Canadian building code and standards system. Technical matters will be pressed at trilateral Canada-U.S.-Japan talks (Building Experts Committee, Japan Agricultural Standards Technical Committee), to be held in 2003 in Japan.

#### **Value-Added Building Products**

Under the revised Japanese building code, a new system of testing and approval bodies has been established that has proven very difficult for Canadian manufacturers to use. Currently, only Japanese testing and approval bodies are authorized under the new system. In many cases, the process to be used by a Canadian manufacturer is not clear. In 2002, an initiative to analyse this system and possibly develop a roadmap was launched, and this work will continue into 2003.

#### **Tariffs on Spruce-Pine-Fir Lumber and Softwood Plywood**

Japan's system of tariff classification distinguishes between the species and dimensions of lumber, regardless of end use. As a consequence, spruce-pine-fir (SPF) lumber imports, worth over \$400 million per year to Canada, are subject to duties ranging from 4.8% to 6.0%, whereas other species imported for the same purpose enter duty free. The 6.0% tariff on softwood plywood is also considered to severely limit Canadian exports and unfairly favour the domestic Japanese industry. Reducing SPF and softwood plywood tariffs are a high priority for Canada and will be pursued in the WTO multilateral trade negotiations.

#### **Three- and Four-Storey Wood Frame Construction**

A major new market opportunity in Japan is urban construction of three- and four-storey mixed use buildings. Although three-storey wood frame construction is now allowed in quasi-fire protection (QFP) zones, it is restricted to a maximum of only 1,500 square metres, and requires uneconomic property line setbacks and limiting distance calculations for exterior wall openings. These restrictions unfairly and sharply limit the use of three-storey wood construction. There is also a size limit of 3,000 square metres for non-QFP zones, and Japanese fire-wall specifications (which could allow larger structures) are unfair and not based on science. Four-storey wood frame construction is increasingly being used in North America, but faces a difficult and unclear regulatory regime in Japan. A performance-based system is being implemented by Japan, but in comparison to steel (which is produced in Japan), wood frame construction from Canada is very unfairly treated. Canada will use bilateral and multilateral forums to press for a more science-based approach to open this market to Canadian industry.

#### **Performance Requirements for Lumber for Traditional Housing**

Canada is working to ensure that performance criteria being developed for traditional zairai housing in Japan are not based solely on the use of Japanese-grown tsugi lumber (which is one of the weaker species), but recognize the characteristics of other species (e.g. hemlock, which is stronger). Otherwise innovation and efficiencies are lost. The process for implementing new products and technologies after formal approval is obtained is unnecessarily difficult and needs streamlining.

#### **Agricultural Standards for Building Products—Standards Review Process**

Under the revised Japan Agricultural Standards system, specific standards are now reviewed on a five-year cyclical basis. Canada continues to work with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MoAFF) in various technical forums to provide data to assist in the revision of standards concerning building products. In 2002, the MoAFF undertook the review of standards for plywood and structural glue-laminated timber. Issues arose, particularly around the formaldehyde testing of plywood and the exclusion of jack pine