

EC Position

EC officials appear to be following a responsible line in assessing the available research data on PWN on their merits. They have not been supportive of the Irish move prior to the completion of the EC's own evaluation. Earlier in 1989, an EC Fact Finding Group was provided with an extensive cross-Canada tour to examine sawmill and shipping operations, to be briefed first hand on Canada's Mill Certificate Program, and to discuss the issue with government, industry and scientific personnel. Its report and recommendations will be discussed in early 1990 by the EC Standing Committee on Plant Health and by the European Council.

Canadian Position and Assessment

In the interim, the Canadian government has made Ministerial and diplomatic interventions, both to the EC and to Member States. Canada is providing EC officials with detailed information and briefings on the prevalence of PWN in Canada, the Mill Certificate Program, and an assessment of the risk of transmission of PWN to EC countries in order to assist EC officials in their consideration of any phytosanitary regulations.

The Irish kiln-drying regulation is viewed as an unnecessary barrier to trade, and it is widely recognized that Ireland is embarking on a wider program of support to its domestic forest industry. Although certain EC Member States support the Canadian position, such support is by no means unanimous.

While the ultimate outcome will have to await the deliberations and decision of the European Commission and Council, the EC has repeatedly advised Canada that it is only a matter of time before all softwood lumber imports must be kiln-dried. Canadian provinces and industry associations have been kept abreast of this issue and will continue to be provided with current information and assessments.