

Department calls for compliant wood-packaging

As the globe observes the International Year of Plant Health (IYPH) 2020, the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development has urged those who trade in agricultural and non-agricultural products involving wood-packaging material to comply with the International Standard for Phytosanitary Measures.



Image source: [Gallo/Getty](#)

The United Nations' IYPH for 2020 aims to raise global awareness on how protecting plant health can help end hunger, reduce poverty, protect the environment, and boost economic development.

The department said untreated wood-packaging material can be a pathway for the introduction of pests of economic concern, which may negatively affect the country's natural resources, agriculture and forestry in particular.

Regulated wood-packaging material includes coniferous and non-coniferous raw wood-packaging material.

This covers wood-packaging material such as pallets, dunnage, crating, packing blocks, drums, cases, loading boards, pallet collars and skids, which can be present in any imported or exported consignments.

Heat Treatment, Dielectric Heating and fumigation with Methyl Bromide or Sulphuryl Fluoride are currently the only approved treatments for wood-packaging material.

"The treatments are considered significantly effective against most pests of living trees associated with wood-packaging material. Irrespective of the type of treatment applied, wood packaging must be made of debarked wood," said the department on Tuesday.

The department advised that treated wood-packaging material should bear the appropriate International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) mark to certify that the wood-packaging material has been subjected to approved phytosanitary measures.

"Markings should be rectangular or square in shape, surrounded by borderlines with a vertical line separating IPPC logo from country information, legible, permanent and non-transferable, have no additional information within borders of the mark and must not be hand-drawn."

Marking packages

In addition, markings should be placed in a visible location, on two opposite sides of the article being certified.

"The use of red or orange colours must be avoided because these are used only for hazardous goods. Remanufactured wood-packaging material must be re-treated and marked in accordance with ISPM 15," said the department.

Service providers are required to mark wood-packaging material with a treatment date as a traceability and control measure, and the date must consist of a day, month and year and strictly be placed outside the borders of IPPC mark.

In terms of ISPM 15, wood-packaging material can only be treated and marked by service providers that are registered with the department.

Organisations, including freight forwarders, cross border road transport associations, fresh produce exporters' forums, import and export agencies, post offices, as well as other relevant organisations and or industries are requested to assist in raising awareness to their members and ensure compliance with ISPM 15 and related phytosanitary requirements.

"Compliance with ISPM 15 and other related phytosanitary measures will assist in ensuring smooth, fair and safe trade, as well as enhancing economic growth. Any party that requires training on ISPM 15 can forward a request to the National Plant Protection Organisation of South Africa in the department."

Shipments or consignments with a non-complying wood-packaging material may be subject to treatment, destruction or refused entry.

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