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European Union Votes to Delay Debark Requirement

(Until December 31, 2008)

The European Union voted this week to delay implementing a debark requirement on import wood packaging material through December 31, 2008.* This is the second time NWPCA, by working with numerous federal and international agencies, has persuaded the EU to delay this burdensome, costly mandate.

“This was a complicated process involving an international phytosanitary standard with serious trade implications,” said Bruce Scholnick, president of NWPCA. “As this issue progressed, we found we needed to involve not only the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) which is responsible for the technical aspects of this issue but also the U.S. Trade Representative and Department of Commerce to deal with the business side and the State Department and the EU Delegation for the diplomatic position. Whether it was science, commerce or diplomacy, NWPCA was ever present representing the wood packaging industry’s real-world, practical viewpoint.”

The EU says it will set aside the debarking issue while technical justification for changing the standards is considered in the IPPC. The EU will review the progress of IPPC consideration in September 2007. NWPCA will continue to make the case that phytosanitary standards need to be based on sound science that is balanced with world wide commercial realities.

*This information is from the Brussels office of the U.S. Foreign Agriculture Service in the Department of Agriculture. The European Union has not yet released official documents or any announcements on the details of the vote.

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