

THEY'RE ALL ALIENS: INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES TO ADDRESS ALIEN INVASIVE SPECIES

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ABSTRACT

Global forest resources are under attack, not just from native pests, but also increasingly from alien or non-indigenous forest pests that are finding their way to new ecosystems and in some cases causing serious mortality and damage. Examples of these invasions can be found in forests worldwide, and in most cases, the introduction of the pests can be linked to international trade. Many countries have documented the interception of insect pests on imported wood and wood products, and such data indicate that pests are coming from and going to most trading nations. All countries are therefore likely complicit in the international movement of forest pests. As such, it is appropriate and likely most effective if approaches to mitigation of pests are agreed upon and developed at the international level.

Most national and international strategies to address alien invasive species include common elements such as the prevention of harmful intentional and unintentional introductions, the detection and identification of new invaders, and the management of established and spreading invaders through eradication, containment, and control. A number of international groups are active in the research and development of solutions to the spread of alien pests.

One such body is the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) Technical Panel on Forest Quarantine (TPFQ). This group is represented by scientists and phytosanitary experts from around the world who review relevant technical and scientific information to provide guidance to the standards committee of the IPPC as requested on development, amendment, and revision of international phytosanitary standards. Such standards encourage contracting parties to the IPPC to “secure common and effective action to prevent the spread and introduction of pests of plants and plant products, and to promote appropriate measures for their control” and to

provide a framework for the development of harmonized national phytosanitary regulations. ISPM 15, the international standard on wood packaging, created before the formation of the TPFQ, was recently revised by the panel. Other tasks include developing criteria for the evaluation of existing and new treatments for inclusion in ISPM 15, and providing advice on the practicality and effectiveness of new treatments. Several new standards are being worked on by the panel: international movement of wood, international movement of forest tree seeds, and forest pest surveys.

Another body that works closely with, but is formally independent of, the IPPC is the International Forest Quarantine Research Group (IFQRG). The IFQRG is an independent science body with an open membership from the science and plant health regulatory communities and industry that carries out analysis and research on international forest quarantine issues. Currently there are about 60 active members from 25 countries. A close relationship has evolved between the TPFQ and IFQRG. As the TPFQ identifies research and scientific analysis gaps through its deliberation of issues, requests are made to the IFQRG. Much of the work of the group has focused on science needs related to the modification and revision of ISPM 15 and to the development of new phytosanitary treatments for wood packaging and other forestry commodities. Current work includes research supporting the development of new treatments of wood packaging and other wood commodities and the development of efficacy testing protocols for use in evaluating existing and new treatments. The IFQRG will continue to respond to the needs of IPPC bodies, providing research supporting the development of new standards.

The North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO) is a regional body that coordinates the efforts

among Canada, the United States, and Mexico to protect their plant resources from the entry, establishment, and spread of regulated plant pests, while facilitating intraregional and interregional trade. The NAPPO forestry panel leads the development of regional standards for forest products moving to NAPPO countries, an important mechanism in ensuring an effective perimeter approach to protecting North America. The direct inclusion of Canadian industry in NAPPO forestry discussions ensures that industry concerns are addressed through the development of regional standards. Currently the forestry panel is drafting a standard on Asian gypsy moth, developing a strategy for North American compliance issues regarding ISPM 15, and initiating a standard for the regulatory control of wooden handicrafts.

Finally, there is a relatively new working group within the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO): WG 7.03.12, Alien Invasive Species in International Trade. This group examines global forestry issues related to the unwanted international movement of alien invasive species, including fungi, insects, nematodes, and plants. The increasing emphasis on pathways for movement of alien invasive species, including those associated with wood packaging and “plants for planting” provides a broad focus for the work of the group.

Through the combined efforts of these international forest quarantine initiatives, we intend to gain a common recognition of international forest pest issues, foster a cooperative approach to international research, and support the development of internationally harmonized phytosanitary regulations that will result in a reduction in the global movement of forest pests.