

TECHNICAL NOTES

FOREST PRODUCTS LABORATORY

U. S. FOREST SERVICE

MADISON, WISCONSIN

No. 123

REDUCE PULPWOOD DECAY BY PROPER STORAGE

Wood storage conditions at pulp mills are the primary causes for pulp losses as high as 400 pounds per cord of wood, and inestimable losses through poorer quality of paper. Recent investigations by the U. S. Forest Products Laboratory, Madison, Wisconsin, have shown that the wood yards of many mills are littered with rotting bark and debris which serve as sources of infection for the fresh wood. Pulp wood is generally piled directly on the ground, which is usually poorly drained and overgrown with weeds, thus preventing the necessary circulation of air. The wood is not used in rotation, and some of it remains in the piles for several years. These conditions must be corrected before the mills can expect to control the decay problem.

The chief points recommended by the laboratory in reforming the present practice of pulpwood storage are:

Ship pulp logs as soon as possible after cutting, to prevent their lying in the woods where high moisture content and growing vegetation tend to cause infection and decay.

Peel logs, if possible, as this prevents borers from attacking the wood, and also hastens air drying.

Drain and care for storage yards, so as to reduce the soil moisture as far as possible; cut weeds to permit better ventilation. Filling in the yard with cinders will give good drainage and keep down weeds. The yard should never be placed on barker waste.

Do not rick wood directly on the ground. The best procedure is to pile it on stringers supported by concrete piers or creosoted wood blocks. The stringers should be pressure-treated with coal-tar creosote. The piers or blocks should be high enough to raise the stringers at least 12 inches off the ground to allow for ample ventilation.

If ground is available, pile so that the full length of the pile is exposed to the prevailing winds. Never place the piles less than three feet apart.

Mark each pile of logs with the date it was received and, if possible, the age of the wood. Use up the wood in rotation.

Upon removal of a pile of wood, clean up the debris and burn it, lest it become a source of infection for new wood. All infected skid logs should be removed.

Where timber is placed in conical piles by conveyors, a possible remedy may be to keep the wood saturated with water by means of an overhead sprinkler system delivering the minimum amount of water necessary to keep the surface of the pile wet. Wood saturated with water will not rot because there is not enough air within the timber to allow the fungi to grow. Whether it is commercially possible to wet the piles down sufficiently and maintain them in this condition must, however, be demonstrated by actual test.