

TECHNICAL NOTE NUMBER 150

FOREST PRODUCTS LABORATORY - U. S. FOREST SERVICE - MADISON, WISCONSIN.

DIRECTION OF FIBERS AFFECTS STRENGTH OF FIBER BOXES

The direction in which the fibers run in fiber-board boxes has been found to have considerable effect upon the serviceability of the boxes. Fiber-board does not tear as easily across the grain as with the grain; it may have two or three times as much strength in one direction as in the other, the difference varying with manufacturing conditions. This excess strength may be advantageously used to reinforce the weakest points of the box and so produce a better balanced construction.

The weakest parts of fiber boxes are the scores, or folds forming the edges of the box. It is impossible to have the fibers running perpendicular to every score, but usually they might be made to run perpendicular to the scores which receive the hardest punishment, or which tend to break open first. The location of the scores most liable to failure, of course, varies with the shape of the box and the nature of the contents, and can best be determined by test. The following comments and deductions are for boxes whose depth is less than their width.

In tests at the U. S. Forest Products Laboratory, on fiber boxes, some packed with two dozen No. 2 food cans, and some with four dozen tall sized milk cans, it was found that the first break nearly always occurred in the horizontal end scores. By making up the boxes so that the fibers ran vertically instead of horizontally in the sides and ends, the first break throughout the length of a horizontal end score was retarded about 85 per cent. Through the same change, the horizontal side scores, which received the next hardest punishment, were

strengthened so that the first break never occurred in them.

The gain in strength of the horizontal scores was, of course, accompanied by a weakening of the vertical scores. But since the upright scores do not ordinarily receive as great stress as the horizontal scores, and in these particular tests were not as likely to come in contact with the sharp edges of the cans, they were able to stand a reduction in strength and yet not become the point of first failure.

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