



# NEWS RELEASE

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4700 River Road, Riverdale, MD 20737-1232 • Voice (301) 851-4100 • Web: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov>

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Contact:  
Alyn Kiel (301) 851-4072  
Lyndsay Cole (970) 494-7410

## **USDA Announces First Log Exports to China from Virginia and South Carolina under New Pilot Program**

WASHINGTON, June 7, 2012—The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) today announced log exports bound for China from South Carolina and Virginia will resume under a new pilot program.

“This pilot program signals renewed confidence in Virginia and South Carolina forestry exports from a key trading partner,” said Rebecca Blue, deputy under secretary for marketing and regulatory programs. “Today, USDA commends our partners at the Departments of Agriculture in Virginia and South Carolina, wood trade industries, port authorities, and fumigation companies for the work they have done to improve safeguarding measures against pinewood nematodes and other pests.”

In early April, as part of ongoing technical discussions with Chinese plant health officials, including information sharing and discussion of an export pilot program, APHIS hosted a visit by Chinese officials to log production, inspection and fumigation and shipping locations in Virginia and South Carolina. After the visit, China agreed to institute a six-month pilot program for log exports, beginning on June 1, through December 1, 2012.

Under the terms of the agreement, logs exported to China during the pilot program must meet all existing export requirements, as well as certain additional requirements for fumigations, enhanced pinewood nematode testing, phytosanitary certification, and ports of entry. At the end of the pilot program, if all logs exported to China have met quarantine requirements, China has agreed to formally reopen the market for exports of logs from Virginia and South Carolina.

“We are optimistic that enhanced sampling and treatment procedures will lead to a successful pilot program,” said Blue. “We are committed to working with our stakeholders in Virginia and South Carolina to make this a reality.”

The United States exported more than \$7.7 billion in forestry products last year, supporting more than 65,000 jobs. Nearly 25 percent of those exports landed in China, the second largest market for U.S. timber. Seaports in Virginia and South Carolina handled more than half-a-billion-dollars in U.S. forestry exports last year.

China suspended imports of logs from Virginia and South Carolina in April 2011, due to pest interceptions.

The Obama Administration, with Agriculture Secretary Vilsack's leadership, has aggressively worked to expand export opportunities and reduce barriers to trade, helping to push agricultural exports to record levels in 2011 and beyond. U.S. agriculture is currently experiencing one of its best periods in history thanks to the productivity and resourcefulness of our producers. Today, net farm income is at near record levels while debt has been cut in half since the 1980s. Overall, American agriculture supports 1 in 12 jobs in the United States and provides American consumers with 83 percent of the food we consume, while maintaining affordability and choice. Strong agricultural exports contribute to a positive U.S. trade balance, create jobs, boost economic growth and support President Obama's National Export Initiative goal of doubling all U.S. exports by the end of 2014.

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