

MSR COUNCIL MATTERS

May 2010

Lumber Quality Education

As we have communicated with our customers through our surveys, at BCMC, and in our focus group conversations, one sentiment has come through loud and clear – component manufacturers are concerned about the quality of MSR lumber. To address these concerns, MSRLPC collaborated with *SBC Magazine* on an article in the May 2010 issue, “Component Manufacturers, Lumber Producers Address Lumber Quality.” Based on interviews with lumber producers and component manufacturers, the article noted 5 top concerns from both perspectives:

Component Manufacturer Issues

1. Rising cull rate

Culling is estimated at 15–40% of lumber purchased (MSR and visually graded), compared to 5–10% previously.

2. Poor appearance

More wane, knots, cracks and splits are present, in contrast to MSR's reputation for being generally wane free with few knots.

3. Inability to rely on grade quality

Manufacturers have been “up-grading” to avoid wane and knots; some have eliminated No.2 & BTR and 1650 from their inventory until quality is resolved.

4. Loss of quality wood to exports/big box

Superior visual quality lumber is being sold in other markets—namely China, Japan and U.S. and Canadian “big box” stores.

5. Slow response from lumber industry

Manufacturers are frustrated and some feel that lumber producers are not working fast enough to address their concerns.

Lumber Producer Issues

1. Lumber isn't graded for components

Grades were developed for a wide range of markets/opportunities, and mills are not focused on the needs of specific applications.

2. Technology makes lumber true to grade

New technology makes grading extremely accurate, removing the subjectivity that unintentionally inflated grades previously.

3. Decline in fiber quality

So much fiber has been damaged by the pine beetle that harvesting is a challenge and many trees start drying before they can be cut.

4. Grading rules have not changed

The grading rules set forth by NLGA govern the industry, though producers may choose to calibrate grading machines to a level higher.

5. Addressing the issues takes time

Customers should communicate with salesmen and brokers, track cull rates, and pass along feedback as producers continue to take measures to improve the situation.

The [complete article](#) is posted on the [SBC Magazine](#) website. Please consider discussing this article with your customers and [let us know](#) their (and your) feedback. We'd love to hear from you.

We will continue to develop the lines of communication between component manufacturers and lumber producers to address the issues and support the use of MSR lumber.