



International Conversion Handbook for Forest Products Revised

Measurement systems evolved to service different needs along all the stages of processing, from raw material to finished products. Those new to the forest products industry and seasoned professionals alike can be mystified and frustrated by the different measurement systems in place. Measurement error has often been expensive, making accurate conversion a practical business necessity.

Forest products are measured by volume, weight, dimension, or all three. Regional differences sometimes cause inconsistent measurement conversions, and those trading internationally confront an even greater difficulty in understanding the various foreign measurement systems. Thus one encounters board feet, cubic feet, cubic meters, and weight measures for logs, and each type has several variations. Similar problems occur with chips, lumber, panels, and other products.

Consistency Problems Add To Confusion

Using the metric system does not completely eliminate problems, because local customs of measure were often simply translated into metric units and thus retain all of the original idiosyncrasies. Converting to cubic meters adds consistency problems to confusion by leading people to believe that a cubic meter of volume refers to the same quantity across all countries and products. In reality, a cubic meter measured for different products or by different countries rarely represents the same quantity of actual wood.

"Conversion Factors" Book

The College of Forest Resources has periodically published a handbook titled Conversion Factors for the Pacific Northwest Forest Industry, "which provides useful guidelines and formulas for the region. The last edition was produced in 1976 when Old-growth still dominated the resource, and before the current era of personal computers and expanded international trade. Based on his research covering many measurement systems, Professor David Briggs is *delivering* a new, expanded edition that reflects today's realities.

New Edition Expands Coverage

The new edition covers more products than earlier editions, and emphasizes how to perform calculations. It also provides information on many foreign measurement systems. Contents by chapter title:

- Basic Wood Properties: Moisture Content, Shrinkage & Swelling, Density & Specific Gravity
- Measurement of Logs
- Stacked Roundwood, Poles, Piling, Ties and Construction Logs
- Lumber
- Veneer and Plywood
- Non-Veneer Panel Products: CSB/Waferboard, Particleboard, Medium Density Fiberboard, Hardboard and Insulation Board
- Chips, Sawdust, Planer Shavings, Bark & Hog Fuel Pulp & Paper
- Energy
- Shingles & Shakes
- Tree Biomass And Harvesting Residues

Emphasis On Modern Realities

The new edition recognizes that many users will not have a background in forest products, and that most will have access to a computer. Explanation of terminology and formulas is emphasized, and many examples are provided. The objective is not only to provide a user with enough understanding to know what data he or she must collect, but also to enable the user to convert procedures into computer format.

Companion Diskette Being Developed

In cooperation with scientists at the USFS Pacific Northwest Research Station in Portland, Oregon, Professor Briggs is developing a companion computer program that will be available on computer diskette. Many of the common procedures are being organized in a friendly, menu-driven system that will query the user for the type of product and factor desired, guide the user through entry of required data, and then perform the computations.