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An Evaluation of Japanese Softwood Construction Lumber Grading Systems and Their Implications for North American Export Lumber Producers

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Executive Summary

This study has developed information regarding the softwood construction lumber market in Japan and the major types of wood-based housing markets where this lumber is used. Since a large fraction of Japan's softwood supplies are imported from North America and as various factors influence Japan to import more finished softwood lumber as opposed to logs, it has become important for North American producers to become familiarized with Japanese softwood standards including sizes required, manufacturing tolerances, and grading rules. This report presents current detailed information on these factors, compares them with North American rules and provides approximate cross-references. In many cases, exact cross-references are impossible due to inherent differences between the Japanese and North American systems which are highlighted.

The acquisition of information for this report required the consultation of numerous individuals employed by lumber manufacturing firms, and export trading entities. Their information provided insight on the adaptations of North American lumber manufacturers to the Japanese lumber market. In addition, perspective on the historical background, and current status of lumber quality standardizations in Japan was achieved with the assistance of private sources.

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