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Forest Products Sector Profile of Taiwan

Gerard F. Schreuder, and Richard P. Vlosky. 1987

Introduction

Forest products are an important component of Taiwan's international trade mix comprising the fifth largest commodity group exported in 1984 with a value of \$1.5 billion (EIU Annual Supplement, 2985), or 4.2% of the country's foreign exchange earnings (Asian Timber, Nov. 1985). This is an increase of over 500% since 1975. Nearly 65,000 people are employed across all wood-based sectors and their per capita productivity is around US \$2,500.

Not only has the value of wood products exports increased, but also the diversity of products exports. In 1975 plywood accounted for over half of Taiwan's wood exports but today it accounts for less than one-fifth. New growth markets include wood interior housing components, builder's joinery, and rattan, bamboo, and other furniture.

Taiwan has little available domestic forest resources which require reliance upon imports of virtually all logs, sawnwood, fiberboard, particleboard, veneer as well as bamboo and rattan used in domestic production.

This paper will examine structural changes that have occurred in Taiwan's forest products sector over the past four decades and these changes influence Taiwan's participation in world forest products trade.

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