



International **Phytosanitary** Measure Phase out of Methyl Bromide use in the wood fumigation

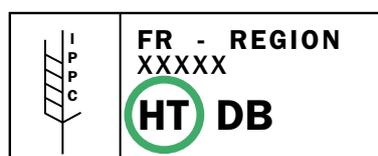
The use of methyl bromide in the EU has been banned for most purposes, including quarantine and pre-shipment fumigations. Since the 18 March 2010, only the heat treatment is permitted in Europe under the latest Council Directive (91/414/EEC).



The International Phytosanitary Measure ISPM 15 (April 2004) for preventing the spread of pests and plant diseases requires that all wood packaging materials must be treated with heat or fumigated and marked, during international transportation, especially in containers. However, methyl bromide (CH₃Br), widely used, is a recognized ozone-depleting chemical (Montreal Protocol) since February 2002.

Comments

In order to respect the ISPM 15, it is recommended to use the heat treatment for securing and packaging with wood. But, owing to the increase of the stock, a risk of infection by parasites and fungus should be taken into consideration because the heat treatment is not persistent and the expiry date not shown.



Perspectives

Meanwhile, some other fumigation issues are being considered:

- **Methyl iodide** (CH_3I), very efficient but expensive, requires a fumigation of 24 hours;
- **Sulfuryl fluoride** (SO_2F_2) with a minimum temperature treatment of 20 degrees C, is already agreed by the Australian authorities for goods transported from the US.
- **Methyl isothiocyanate and mixture gas of sulfuryl fluoride**, are used in the US for treatment of electric posts. At present, Japan is the only producer.
- **Phosphine** (PH_3), accepted by New Zealand, is cheap, but its exposure duration is long – i.e., between 5 and 10 days with a temperature higher than 15 degrees C.

In February 2011, the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization is expected to make a decision on the gas that can be substituted to Methyl Bromide, contingent dependent on the project status of scientific research results.

However, a consensus must be found between the 135 countries of the IPPC (International Plant Protection Convention).



Source : Johnson group PS