



Lacey Act Blanket Declaration Pilot Program

As you are most likely aware, the amendments to the *Lacey Act* on illegal logging came into force on May 1, 2009. This first phase of the enforcement requires exporters to file an import declaration on several wood products entering the United States. The Government of Canada has worked closely with Canadian industry and American officials to try to reduce the burden of the *Lacey Act* import declaration requirements as we recognize that the import declaration may be a problem for exporters.

The United States Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) recently announced a Blanket Declaration Pilot Program beginning May 1, 2009. This will allow exporters who frequently ship goods that require the *Lacey Act* import declaration to file only one blanket declaration each month, with subsequent reconciliation reports. If you are currently exporting to the United States under Customs and Border Protection's Automated Line Release (ALR) or Border Release Advance Screening and Selectivity (BRASS) programs you are eligible to participate. Under the pilot program, the blanket declaration will be filed on a monthly basis. On or before the 15th of every month, the blanket declaration must be filed for the reporting period of the following month. An exporter will have 15 days after the end of the month to file a reconciliation with APHIS which will provide information on the actual shipments. At this point, the format of the reconciliation does not appear to be established.

While this blanket declaration program differs from that suggested by Canadian industry and the Government of Canada, it nonetheless appears to be a positive step forward. Accordingly, the Government of Canada encourages eligible exporters to participate in this program and to provide detailed comments to Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade officials (see contact below) relating to its practical operation and any suggestions to make it more streamlined.

For more information, please visit the APHIS *Lacey Act* website:

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/lacey_act/index.shtml

Information on the specific blanket declaration pilot program can be found at:

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/lacey_act/downloads/PilotProgramAnnouncement.pdf