

## **AssiDomän delivers Sweden's first FSC-approved wood**

**AssiDomän has begun the first-ever shipments of Swedish timber that has been environmentally approved by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). The recipient is Masons Timber Products in the UK, Europe's largest mouldings manufacturer. The wood products will be sold by the home improvement and garden products chain Homebase, in their 300 stores throughout the UK. By March 1998 a range of 250 different FSC-labelled products of Swedish origin will be offered to British consumers.**

Sweden is the first country where a broad agreement on national FSC criteria has been reached between the forest products industry, environmental NGOs and social interests. AssiDomän has been very much involved in this process. Lennart Ahlgren, AssiDomän's president and CEO, explains why:

"We strive for environmentally sound forestry, combining biodiversity with a high financial return. More and more customers are demanding that we comply with high environmental standards. But it's not enough that we give assurances ourselves. The FSC certification is an independent, internationally accepted verification that AssiDomän's forestry practices are environmentally appropriate. In the long run, this may be a prerequisite for surviving on the market."

Per Rosenberg, European Forest Officer at WWF International, which has been heavily involved in the FSC work, calls the shipments to the UK a breakthrough: "It is extremely encouraging that AssiDomän, one of the truly big players in the global timber market, is now starting to supply FSC-certified products. I'm convinced that many other companies will soon follow AssiDomän's positive example."

Örebro Forest Region, in the middle of Sweden, is the first within AssiDomän to be FSC-certified. The northern forest regions of Kalix and Älvsbyn have also been audited. Half of AssiDomän's 3.2 million hectares of productive forest land is expected to be certified by year-end. AssiDomän's ambition is that all its forest holdings should be certified by the spring of 1998.

AssiDomän also certifies the sawmills to be able to guarantee the origin of the products all the way to the customer. The FSC calls this "chain of custody"; all parts of the chain must be secured. Chain of custody is required so that the customer can in turn offer certified end products. The timber now being delivered to the UK was sawn at AssiDomän's sawmill Hasselfors Timber, in central Sweden. The Lövholmen sawmill in northern Sweden, a part of AssiDomän Nord Trä, will shortly be able to supply FSC-labelled products.

AssiDomän works parallel with the FSC and the environmental management systems ISO 14001 and EMAS. The difference can be compared to a pole vault competition. ISO 14001 and EMAS describe the rules of the competition. But FSC sets the bar, and you even have to jump over a certain height to be allowed to participate.

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is an independent, international organisation which, on the basis of ten principles, promotes the formulation of national criteria for sustainable forestry. On the basis of these national standards, independent organisations accredited by the FSC can certify forest owners.

The Swedish agreement on a national standard for ecologically sustainable forestry is supported by: the Swedish Forest Industries Association, the Swedish Wood Industry Workers' Union, the Swedish Forest Workers' Union, the National Union of the Swedish Sami People, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation, the Swedish Youth Association for Environmental Studies and Conservation, Friends of the Earth, the Swedish Ornithological Society, the Church of Sweden, the Forestry Society, and the furniture companies Kinnarps AB and IKEA.

Here are some examples of the contents of the agreement:

- Old forest and key biotopes to be saved
- Five per cent to be set aside
- No new drainage (water is important for biodiversity)
- More planned fires (help certain species)
- Dead wood to be created
- Greater share of broadleaved trees
- Special consideration to be given to reindeer herding

AssiDomän is one of Europe's leading forest products companies and the world's largest publicly held forest owner with 3.2 million hectares of productive forest land, an area equivalent to that of Belgium. Manufacturing is concentrated on packaging paper, packaging and sawn timber products. Turnover in 1996 exceeded SEK 19 billion. The Group has 18,000 employees and 312,000 shareholders.

AssiDomän AB  
Corporate Communications  
12 Nov. 1997

For further information:

Olof Johansson, Senior Ecologist AssiDomän Skog & Trä, phone: +46 470 76 54 50  
Mikael Eliasson, Strategic Planning and Business Development AssiDomän Skog & Trä, phone: +46 8 655 90 00  
or through AssiDomäns Press Office: +46 8 655 90 00, +46 8 655 93 93