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AHEC's 'snapshot' on the Furniture Market

A recent market report from the American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC) included a 'quick view' on the furniture market from the eyes of AHEC European Director, David Venables, who had travelled to Vietnam to visit furniture factories, participate in an AHEC seminar, and "gain a better understanding of the relationship between Vietnam's sizeable and expanding furniture industry."

According to the report:

- "Vietnam is now the world's fifth largest producer of wooden furniture, of which over 80 percent is exported, making it the second highest exporter, behind China.
- About 15 percent of those exports go to Europe, of which half is accounted for by the UK.
- The designs and finishes used by furniture industries in Vietnam are therefore heavily influenced by decision makers – designers and retailers – in those export markets."

Also, the country's furniture industry consumes large volumes of low-grade **tulipwood**, which accounts for over 55 percent of all U.S. hardwood exports to Vietnam. It is used in "lower value products and is stained or lacquered, and exported mainly to the U.S.

White oak lumber is the second most important U.S. hardwood after tulipwood, accounting for 15-20 percent of total lumber exports. Very little red oak is currently used by the furniture industry, as most of it finds its way into flooring products and is then exported back to the U.S.

AHEC South East Asia is planning a series of promotion activities around red oak to make industries in Vietnam more aware of its potential. AHEC Europe is increasing activity around red oak, targeting designers and retailers, as these decision makers could play a vital role in which species are used in future product ranges."

About AHEC

From Washington, DC and six overseas offices, AHEC conducts a worldwide non-profit promotion program with activities in more than 5 countries. All programs "are run through the joint efforts of the U.S. hardwood industry and the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and they aim to give members the sharp competitive edge needed to meet the growing worldwide demand for American hardwood products." Visit www.americanhardwoods.org to learn more.