Labeling, Branding & Certification

Tools for marketing your forest products

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Why Label?

- Forest products can be produced in very undesirable ways
- Buyers know it
- Consumer preference for “intangible” qualities is growing
- Distinct markets are forming
- YOU HAVE MARKETABLE QUALITIES
- SMALL & INFORMAL is GOOD
Why Participate in Branding & Certification Programs?

- NOT for “approval”
- Label for market benefit
Goals of Family Forest Owners

Forestland owners generally seek to manage their forests in sustainable ways.

Top 4 reasons for owning forestland in the South:

- Family legacy
- Aesthetics
- Land investment
- Nature protection
- (Timber production is #6)
Consumer Demand

Consumers are increasingly seeking products produced in more desirable ways:

- Organics #1 in growth, 20%+ per year for 10 years, Acreage doubling every 5-6 years (USDA)
- A 2002 study found that 91 percent of consumers surveyed said they would consider switching brands because of negative corporate citizenship practices. (2002 Cone Corporate Citizenship Study)
- 62% of home buyers are concerned about the environmental impact of their home (National Association of Home Builders)
- Participation in the US Green Building Council’s LEED™ program increased 400% from 2005-2008.

THE MARKET IS CHANGING
What Sells?

- “LOCAL” ~ to everyone
- “GREEN” ~ conservation-minded consumers, Green Builders, institutional purchasing
- “SUSTAINABLE” ~ conscious consumers
- “FACE & PLACE” ~ to everyone
What gets labeled?

- Wood & timber
- Forest foods & medicines
- Ornamentalals
- Crafts: baskets, wreaths, etc
- Just about anything…
LABELING

- Simply providing info about your product or production methods on your product
- Unverified
BRANDING

- Associates more than one product with same BRAND
- Can be used for co-marketing more than one business
- Used to build customer recognition & loyalty
- Based on any number of qualities: maker, location, “green”, etc
CERTIFICATION

- Verification of specific claims
- Defined criteria or standards
- 3rd Party Verification is strongest form
- Purchasing policies prefer
What can you do?
LABELING

- DIY
- Anything you think is marketable
- Be aware of what’s regulated
BRANDING
Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project
www.ASAPconnections.org

- “Local” farm products from WNC
- Foods, herbs, ornamentals
- Open to family farms producing products for sale
- Local Food Guide, Branding, Marketing Cost-share
BRANDING
NC Natural Products Association
www.ncnaturalproducts.org

- Health related products made in NC
- Developing branding program
BRANDING
Southern Forests Network
www.SouthernForestsNetwork.org

- Assistance with branding “Local” & “Sustainable” products
CERTIFICATION

Forest Certification
Certifies general forest management & harvesting practices as “sustainable”

Required to sell Carbon Offsets

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)
Tree Farm/Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI)
CERTIFICATION

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)

www.fscus.org

- Highest credibility and market preference
- Only certification to earn LEED credits for wood products
- Certify through Southern Forests Network Group Certification Program
CERTIFICATION

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)

www.fscus.org

- Growing number of FSC certified companies in WNC
- Growing demand for FSC-certified timber from local forests
CERTIFICATION

FSC certified companies participating in the WNC Forest Products Marketing Project

1. Furniture Specialties Inc.
   - Custom Furniture ~ Design ~ Upholstery

2. The Boggs Collective
   - Design + Craftsmanship + Sustainability

3. Appalachian Designs

4. Southern Forests Network

5. Bark House
   - The Original Bark Shingle Manufacturer
CERTIFICATION

Tree Farm/ Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI)

www.TreeFarmSystem.org

- Oldest forest certification system in U.S.
- Widely know in pine region
- Certify through NC Tree Farm Committee
CERTIFICATION

Organic
www.usda.gov

- For ecologically sustainable production of agricultural products
- Mainstream recognition
- Large & fast growing market
Quality Certification

AB Tech Natural Products Lab

http://abtech.edu/sbc/naturalproductslab.asp

- help meeting current good manufacturing practices (cGMP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations for dietary supplements
- analyses are performed using High Pressure Liquid Chromatography (HPLC), Gas Chromatography (GC) and/or Mass Spectrometry (MS)
INTEGRITY

- Don’t B.S.
- Increasing expectation of verification
- Know what’s regulated, trademarked, etc.