

**MEDIA:** Television  
**STATION:** WWMT (CBS)  
**MARKET:** Grand Rapids-Kalamazoo-Battle Creek, MI  
**DATE:** 09/29/09  
**TIME:** 12:07 PM  
**PROGRAM:** News 3 at Noon  
**SUBJECT:** Taking a Hard Look at Wooden Pallets



**ESTIMATED IMPRESSIONS: 26,733**  
**ESTIMATED PUBLICITY VALUE (per 30 seconds): \$1,210.20**



**Josh Roe, Anchor:**

A small beetle responsible for the destruction of millions of trees in Michigan. We're talking about the emerald ash borer. As of last year, more than twenty-five million trees were destroyed. The last few years, state officials began telling campers to stop moving firewood from county to county. But could U.S. officials now be taking action to prevent the future spread of the ash borer? Ranji Sinha went to a special hearing to find out.

*[Begin clip of report by Ranji Sinha]*



**Ranji Sinha, Reporter:**

Well, you'd be hard pressed to even notice them, let alone think about them. But could these wooden pallets be causing major problems, bringing in invasive species? That's what the USDA is trying to figure out.



**Lewis Taffer, Chief Marketing Officer, IGPS Plastic Pallet Marketing Firm (voiceover):**

And, I think the lack of thought is in part what's created this problem.



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**Sinha (voiceover):**

For those in the know, there's a saying on wooden pallets. Putting one into circulation is like putting a dollar bill into circulation. Once it's out there, it's used and reused, and there's no getting it back. That's what concerns the USDA, since the porous wood used in pallets could harbor bacteria and invasive species. It's an issue these people are debating in Grand Rapids, today, and it could have far-reaching implications for the environment, not just in Michigan, but for the country as a whole.

A study in 2006 estimated that seven-point-six billion board-feet of wood were used for pallets. That's enough wood to fill a forest ten times the size of Manhattan Island in New York. Opting for plastic pallets over wooden ones would eliminate deforestation and defend against invasive species like the emerald ash borer.

For Michigan, the ash borer has been a scourge, killing millions of trees, and costing the state millions of dollars. The ash borer may have hitched a ride on a wooden pallet shipped from overseas. So, some people and companies are advocating for plastic pallets that could replace wood, and be a hundred percent recyclable.



**Taffer:**

We definitely have the monetary interest. But part of the reason our company was founded is because we believe there was a more sustainable way to ship goods, than to keep cutting down trees, with all the risks involved.



**Sinha:**

Now, the hearing set up by the USDA in Grand Rapids on wooden pallets was the fourth one set up by the agency. The USDA will have the final say-so on wooden pallets. But it's not clear when that decision will be made.



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In Whelan, Ranji Sinha, News Channel 3.

*[End clip]*



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