



FACT SHEET: *The Impact of Wood Pallets on Our Environment and the Benefits of Switching to Plastic*

	WOOD	PLASTIC
FACT: <i>Wood pallets are depleting our forests, especially precious hardwoods</i>	Nearly 40% of all hardwood harvested in the U.S. is for pallets, about two-thirds of which are limited use, one-way pallets. ⁽¹⁾	iGPS plastic pallets help conserve our forests. They are also 100% recyclable. If a pallet is damaged, it is remolded into new ones — promoting environmental sustainability.
FACT: <i>Wood pallets are clogging America's landfills, contributing to waste disposal problems nationwide</i>	Approximately 4.2 million tons of pallet materials were land-filled at municipal solid waste (msw) facilities in the U.S. in 1995. ⁽²⁾ This equals 1.4% of total waste and 19.6% of total wood waste land-filled at msw facilities. ⁽²⁾	Because iGPS pallets are 100% recyclable, their useful life is indefinite. Unlike wood pallets, disposal is not an issue.
FACT: <i>Wood's porosity presents a risk of bacterial and insect infestation</i>	Because of wood's porosity, pallets made of raw, untreated wood are not compliant with the IPPC. To be compliant wood must, at additional cost, be subjected to heat treatment or chemical fumigation. ⁽⁴⁾	iGPS plastic pallets are inherently immune to infestation and therefore do not require costly heat or chemical fumigation. In addition, they do not absorb moisture or degrade in a wet environment.
FACT: <i>Wood pallets add unnecessary weight to the supply chain, resulting in greater fuel use and added cost</i>	At approximately 75 pounds each, wood pallets are 50% heavier than iGPS plastic pallets. This added weight translates into higher fuel and transport costs, plus millions of pounds of unnecessary green house gasses.	At less than 50 pounds, iGPS plastic pallets are 30% lighter than their wood counterparts, which translates into savings on fuel and transportation. Replacing all wood pallets with plastic pallets would remove 9.25 billion pounds of non-value-added weight from the nation's supply chain. ⁽³⁾
FACT: <i>The common practice of painting wood pallets consumes millions of gallons of paint and is harmful to the environment and the workplace</i>	Paints contain volatile organic compounds (VOC's), such as benzene, toluene, naphthalene, and formaldehyde, which are a major contributor to ozone, an air pollutant. VOC's can also cause adverse short-term health effects such as headache, nausea, dizziness, and eye, throat, and lung irritation. ⁽⁵⁾	iGPS plastic pallets are never painted. Instead, they are simply power-washed before returning to the pool and supply chain.

THE FACTS ARE CLEAR: *iGPS plastic pallets conserve our natural resources, reduce waste, promote hygiene and result in lower fuel and transport costs.*

(1) Department of Wood Science & Forest Products at Virginia Tech University

(2) Wood Pallets and Landfills — Status and Opportunities for Economic Recovery and Recycling — 1995 USDA Forest Service

(3) Based on the following industry statistics: 100 million pooled wood pallets x 3.7 trips per pallet = 370 million pallet trips per year in the U.S. x 25 (the difference in weight between a wood and iGPS plastic pallet) = 9.25 billion pounds

(4) Copesan Services, Inc., a major supplier of fumigation services across North America — Fumigation costs can range from \$175-\$500 per truck load

(5) Health Effects Notebook for Hazardous Air Pollutants, US Environmental Protection Agency, March, 2006.