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## Eastern Washington Sawmill Statistics for the First Half of Calendar Year 2003

2003 Interim Report

Produced by

The Inland Northwest Forest Products Research  
Consortium, a research cooperative centered  
at the Forest Products Department at the University  
of Idaho, the Bureau of Business and  
Economic Research at the  
University of Montana-Missoula, and the  
Wood Materials and Engineering Laboratory  
at Washington State University.  
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# Eastern Washington Sawmill Production for the First Half of Calendar Year 2003

## 2003 Interim Report

The Inland Northwest Wood Products Research Consortium, in cooperation with the Department of Natural Resource Sciences at Washington State University, has undertaken to work closely with the forest products industry of the state of Washington to collect economic and production information related to the Eastern Washington Forest Products Industry. Started in 1999, this effort has received strong support from the wood products industry of the region. This interim report provides a summary of monthly production, shipments, employment, and payroll data for the first half of 2003. The year 2003 summary report will be produced following further data collection.

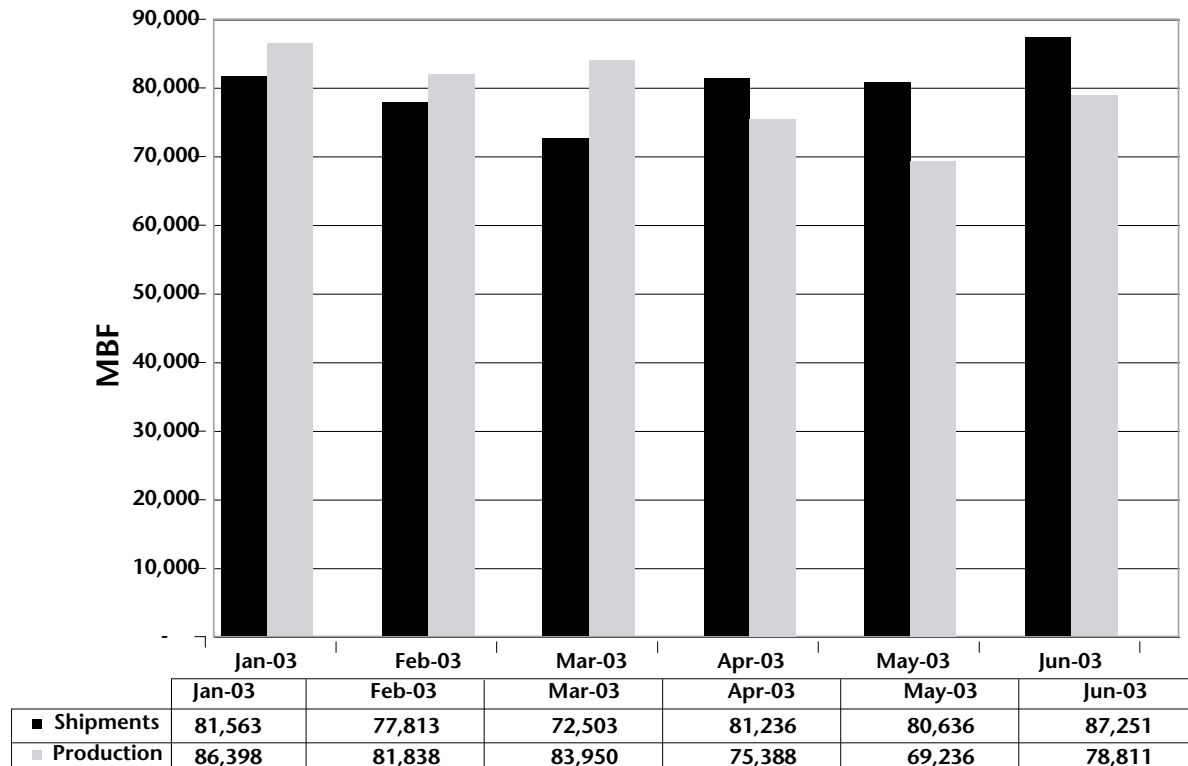
Data presented are based on a census of sawmills located in eastern Washington. For purposes of this report, eastern Washington includes all of the sawmills located east of the Cascade Mountains within the state of Washington.

The intended readers of this information include the Washington State Governor's Office, the Washington State Legislature, industry members, state, federal, and tribal land management agencies, the media, and other parties interested in this important sector of the state's economy.

## Results

During the first half of 2003, the sawmills of eastern Washington produced 475.6 million board feet, lumber tally.<sup>1</sup> This is approximately 3.9% more than during the same period of 2002. Average monthly production of all mills combined was approximately 61 million board feet, lumber tally, ranging from 86.4 million board feet in January to 69.2 million board feet in May. Wet spring weather in some areas curtailed harvest production.

Figure 1. Mill Production vs. Mill Shipments



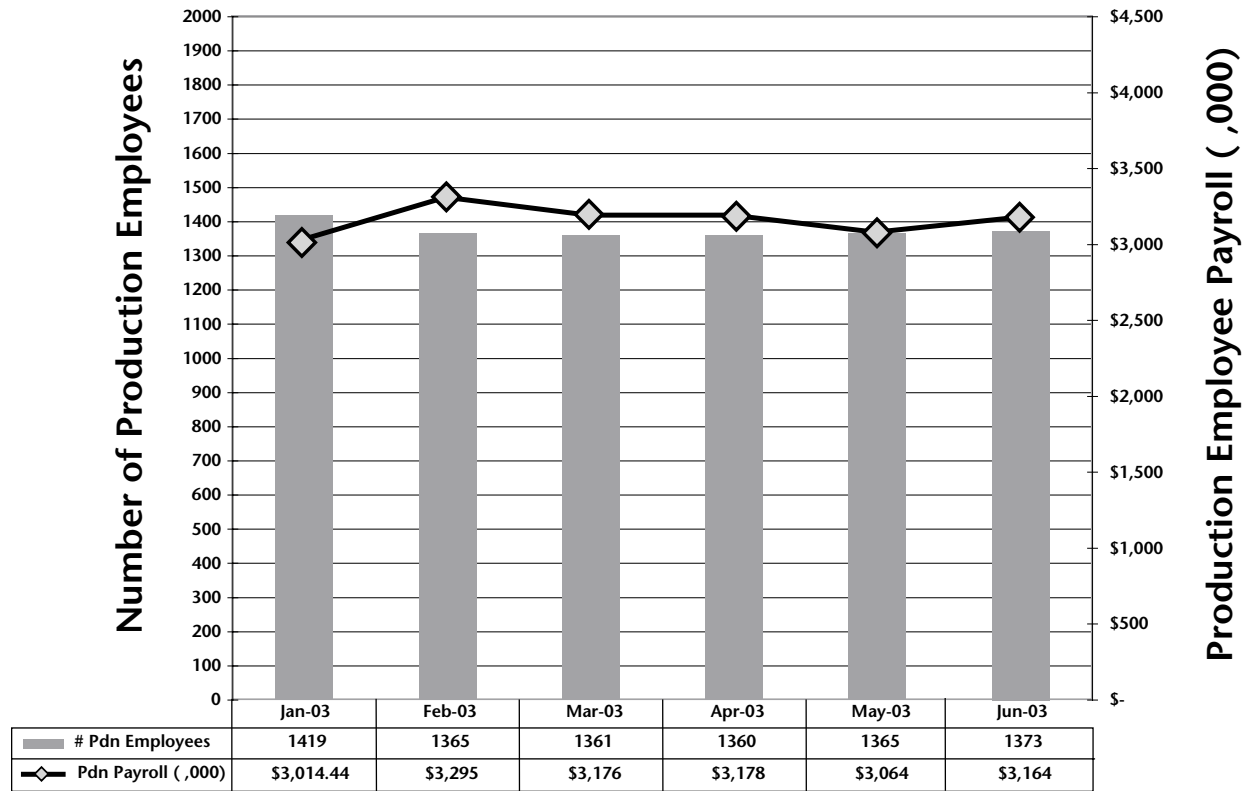
<sup>1</sup> Note one eastern Washington mill ran very intermittently during the first 6 months of 2003. Data from that mill were not used in totals or averages presented here. A second mill was idle during February and March. The data from this mill were used in all calculations.

Shipments by these mills during the first 6 months of 2003 totaled 481 million board feet of lumber, lumber tally (Fig. 1). Shipments during this period exceeded the same period in 2002 by approximately 6.5%. Average monthly shipments for all mills equaled approximately 80.2 million board feet of lumber. Total monthly shipments of lumber during the period were not highly variable, with a low in March of 72.5 million board feet and a high in June of 87.3 million board feet (Fig. 1). Shipments exceeded production by 5.4 million board feet, or 1.1%.

Average monthly employment during this period was nearly constant at 1,374 employees each month, ranging from 1,360 in April to 1,419 in January. Employment numbers were approximately 1.6 below the same period last year. This estimate includes only employees involved directly in lumber production, such as sawyers, millwrights, and associated personnel. Total monthly payroll for these positions averaged \$3.1 million, ranging from \$3 million in January to \$3.3 million in February (Fig. 2). Total payroll for production employees was approximately \$18.9 million during the first 6 months of 2003 in eastern Washington—approximately 11.7% less than the same period in 2002.

The number of hours worked by each production employee averaged 38.5 hours each week, from January through June 2003. June represented the highest average number of hours worked per week, at 40.2, while March had the lowest at 36.9.

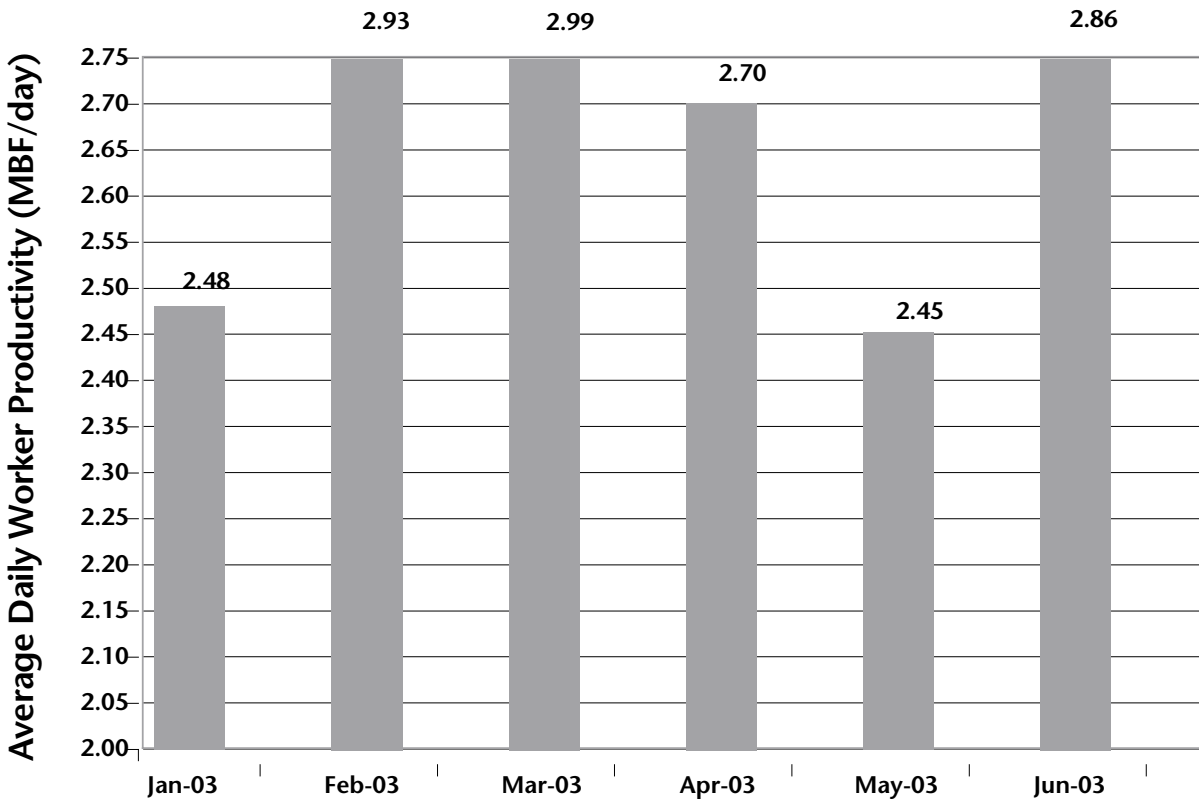
Figure 2. Monthly Employment and Payroll



Employee productivity, measured in thousands of board feet (MBF) produced by each employee, averaged 2.7 MBF per worker day during the first half of 2003. Worker productivity for the region reached its peak during March at 2.99 MBF per worker day and fell to its lowest level during May at 2.5 MBF per worker day (Fig. 3). Productivity per employee increased by 10.2% in the first 6 months of 2003.

Wages paid to production employees averaged \$14.26 per hour during the first half of 2003, based on the total numbers of hours worked in each month and on monthly production employee payroll. The lowest average cost per hour was observed in January at \$12.91, while February had the highest, at \$15.22 per hour. Average hourly pay during this period was 1.1% higher than during the same period in 2002.

Figure 3. Average Daily Worker Productivity



### End Note

Washington State University and the consortium members wish to extend our gratitude and thanks to the members of the forest products industry of eastern Washington for their support of this work and their assistance by providing the base data used in this analysis. As the database grows over the next few years, it will be possible to provide a somewhat more detailed analysis.

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