

## Rural Development Through Forestry

## Blue Stain — Is it Coloring Your Bottom Line Red?

## The Challenge

Each year, Wisconsin's sawmills produce many forest products made from the hard, white-colored wood of sugar maple. The products are valued for their aesthetic qualities and are vital to the State's economy. During the harvesting process, loggers generally leave the sugar maple sawlogs used in manufacturing these products in the woods for later retrieval. The logs develop blue stain, a discoloration produced by fungi, which significantly reduces their value by as much as two-thirds. Millions of dollars are lost each year through this process, which affects sawmill profitability.

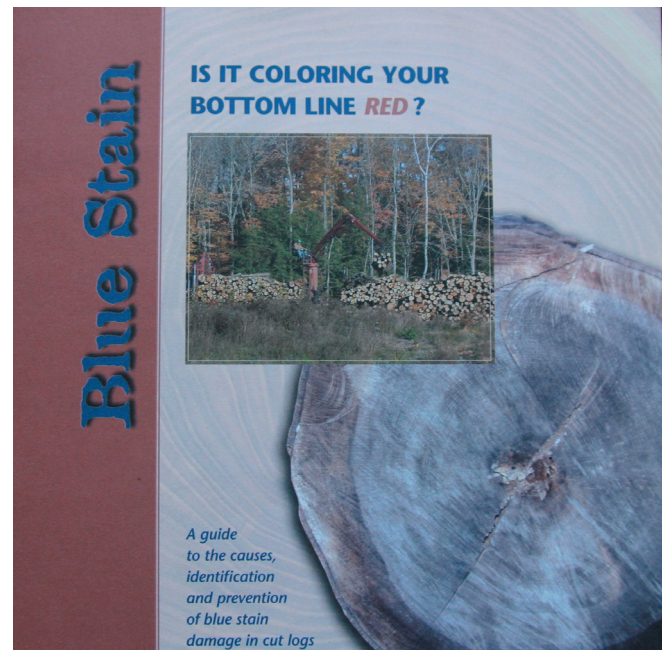
## The Solution

With funding provided by the Northeastern Area's Rural Development Through Forestry program, the Wisconsin Division of Forestry worked with specialists from the University of Wisconsin Extension office, USDA Forest Products Laboratory, and the USDA Technology Marketing Unit to develop a brochure that sawmills can distribute to loggers. It illustrates the causes and development of blue stain and the economic impacts on the forest products industry. The brochure recommends removing sawlogs from the woods first to reduce the occurrence of blue stain. Staining can also be reduced by harvesting easily stained wood at a different time of the year.

## Resulting Benefits

- There is an increased understanding of how discoloration occurs.
- Blue stain occurs less frequently due to changes in harvesting and storage techniques.
- Forest product materials have increased in value for both loggers and sawmills.
- Profits have increased, enabling sawmills to remain competitive.

*Millions of dollars are lost every year when logs develop blue stain. Stained wood results in lower value or rejected wood products.*



*Logs left idle develop blue stain and lose their potential value.*

## Sharing Success

- The brochure is available for downloading from the University of Wisconsin's Web site: <http://clean-water.uwex.edu/pubs/bluestain/>.
- The brochure is being distributed by several large sawmills and the Lake States Lumber Association to the loggers supplying their mills.
- The publication is available to Northeastern Area State specialists as well as other USDA Forest Service specialists.
- Northeastern Area State specialists and USDA Forest Service specialists expressed interest in creating their own version.
- Copies of the brochure were distributed at the Northeast Utilization & Marketing Council's annual conference and training session.



USDA Forest Service  
**Northeastern Area**  
 State and Private Forestry

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