

Sawmill Focus 2015 By Jim Gauntt

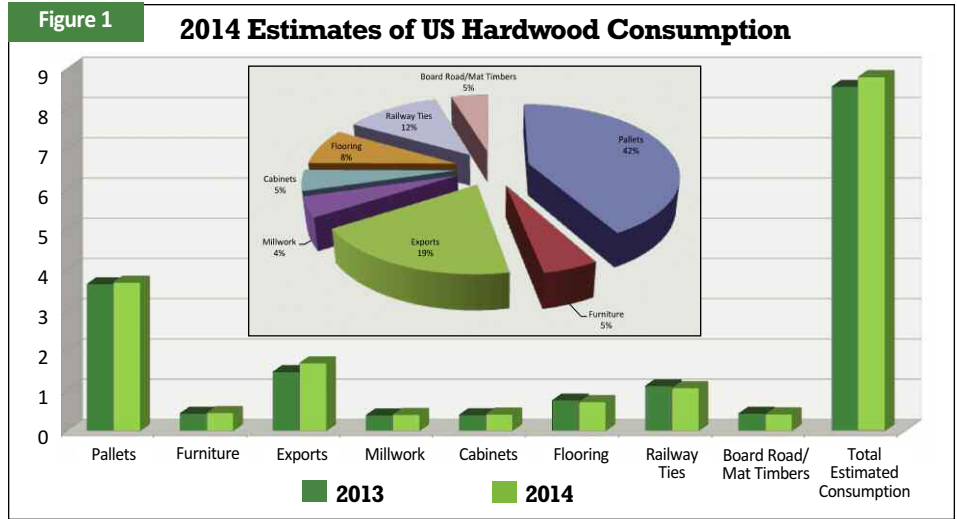
You might have noticed RTA consolidated the industry statistics published in the Tie Trends section. We did this not only to provide space for more content, but also because we had planned to bring you some completely new statistics on a regular basis.

We start this issue in our Sawmill Focus section with a look at hardwood production and consumption across major product categories. Plus, we also take a look at forest inventories by species group across the two Eastern Forest Service Regions.

Thanks to the *Hardwood Market Report* (HMR) we offer a graph of hardwood production for 2014 (see Figure 1). This graph illustrates the change in production for major product categories from 2013 to 2014.

HMR has long partnered with RTA and with this new data we expand that relationship. HMR publishes industry data that is far more extensive than the material we present every two months here in *Crossties*. So, if your business depends on knowing what's happening in the hardwood markets, we strongly suggest you subscribe to their weekly and executive publications.

The second set of data is derived from U.S. Forest Service (USFS) estimates of forest inventories. USFS provides this data publicly and using their EVALIDator application, we have produced forest inventory graphs and statistics by regions and states that illustrate the



mix of hardwood sawtimber species available.

The data provided has been specifically chosen to describe the sawtimber volumes by species that are available on timberland accessible for cutting, assuming a one-quarter-inch kerf. This is a conservative way to provide overall volumes, as it does not include forestland that is off-limits to cutting, and most sawyers are much more efficient these days with kerfs significantly less wasteful than one-quarter inch.

In Figure 2, we compare the hardwood species mix in the two Eastern Forest Service Regions #8 (Southern—Texas and East) and #9 (Northern—MN, IA, MO and East). In future months, we will explore species mix

availability in select groupings of states and individual states. We hope this data will illustrate the unique qualities of the hardwood forest in different areas of the country and allow railroads to understand the characteristics of resource management for sustainable yields.

As always we value your input and hope to hear from our members about the value of exploring these sets of data. Moreover, we also are hopeful to hear from you regarding our sawmill and supplier focus articles. Not only do we want feedback on content, but we are also actively looking for more companies, products and services to profile.

Please email your suggestions to ties@rta.org. ■

