

# RECYCLING IN THE U. S. PALLET INDUSTRY: 1995

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report provides the results of a study that investigated recovery and recycling of pallets by U.S. manufacturers listed under the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) code 2448.

In Spring 1996, data were collected using a mail survey of 1,687 pallet companies across the United States. Using these data we estimated the volume and type of recycling being done by the entire pallet industry. The following are highlights of the study:

- ◆ Firms in the pallet industry recovered 171.1 million pallets from the waste stream in 1995. This is a 105% increase from the estimated number of pallets recovered in 1993 (83.3 million) and a 160% increase from 1992 (65.8 million).
- ◆ The pallets recovered by the industry in 1995 contained approximately 2.61 billion board feet of solid wood. In contrast, the volume of wood in the pallets recovered in 1993 and 1992 was 1.24 billion board feet and 1.03 billion board feet, respectively.
- ◆ Of the 2.61 billion board feet recovered, 2.28 (87.5%) were used again in a pallet (i.e., inspected and reused without repair, repaired and reused, or un-nailed and used to repair or produce rebuilt pallets). An additional 303 million board feet were utilized in other ways, the most common (255 million board feet) being grinding or chipping for products such as fuel, landscape mulch, furnish for fiber-based products, and animal bedding.
- ◆ In 1995, 62.7% of recovered pallets were the multiple-use grocery type. Limited/single-use pallets accounted for 17.4% and other multiple-use pallets made up 15.6% of the pallets recovered.
- ◆ Fewer than 1.5 million (less than 1% of the total) of the pallets recovered by the industry were sent to landfills.