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North American Fiber Markets End 2022 with Volatility

WATKINSVILLE, GEORGIA – January 13, 2023 – Fiber markets remained tumultuous across North America as 2022 drew to a close. Prices reported in the Q4 2022 *Forisk Wood Fiber Review (FWFR)* rose to record levels in the U.S. Northeast and U.S. West. Slowing sawmill operations in Western Canada exacerbated fiber shortages there, contributing to pulpmill production curtailments. Meanwhile, slowing pulp production in the U.S. South placed further downward pressure on fiber prices as quotas abounded for logging contractors in the region despite higher fuel costs. “Fiber prices varied regionally across North America as much as we have seen in years,” according to Forisk VP of Research Shawn Baker. “Softwood chip prices are twice as high in the West as they are in portions of the U.S. South or Eastern Canada.”

Labor availability factored into higher prices in both the Northeast and U.S. West. A lack of logging capacity contributed to significant hardwood fiber scarcity in the Northeast, while a labor strike at Pacific Northwest Weyerhaeuser operations constrained softwood fiber availability there. *FWFR* Associate Editor Vickie Swanton noted, “Western fiber supplies were tight in Q4 and every disruption added to already-elevated prices.” The U.S. South remains a contrast as South Central prices fell for the quarter for all fiber types and Southeast prices were lower to stable. Dropping diesel prices are providing some relief to logging contractors, though fuel prices remain well above 2021 levels.

Wood fiber costs account for over half of total pulp manufacturing cost worldwide. The *Forisk Wood Fiber Review* includes prices and market commentary for all major North American regions, providing essential data for anyone that needs to track pulpwood, wood chips, and biomass prices in the world’s largest and most dynamic wood fiber markets. The *FWFR* provides updates of softwood and hardwood prices for all major markets in North America. Prices are reported for wood delivered to consuming plants as a range and average price. Each report also updates U.S. and Canada trade statistics for lumber, logs, wood pellets, wood chips and pulp.

For more information or to subscribe to the [Forisk Wood Fiber Review](#), visit www.forisk.com or contact: Heather Clark, hclark@forisk.com, 770.725.8447.

About Forisk Consulting: Forisk delivers forecasts and analysis of forest industry markets and timberland investments. Firms participate in Forisk’s research program by subscribing to the *Forisk Research Quarterly (FRQ)*, *Forisk Wood Fiber Review*, *Forisk Market Bulletin*, or the North American Forest Industry Capacity Database; supporting benchmarking studies related to forest operations and mill capacities; and attending educational workshops and the annual “Wood Flows & Cash Flows” conference. www.forisk.com.