



METRIC

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INDUSTRY SURVEY

U.S. Metric conversion 'inevitable'

The United States is converting to metric and U.S. industry believes that metric use is inevitable. These findings are the result of studies carried out for Metric Commission Canada by RES Policy Research Inc. of Ottawa and J.F. Coates Inc. of Washington, D.C., and by the American National Metric Council (A.N.M.C.).

The studies have been presented to the Office of Metric Programs, U.S. Department of Commerce who have concurred with the review of the status, trends and issues covered in these reports.

Respondents to the RES/Coates study have said that international trade considerations are already bringing about metric conversion in manufacturing. This is especially true of heavy machinery, agricultural and construction equipment and automobiles.

A recent study of the "Fortune 500" companies by the A.N.M.C. indicates that about 70% manufacture metric products, and that 30% have a metric conversion policy.

The use of metric measurement by U.S. industry is expected to increase. This growth will come on a product-by-product basis. Companies which are designing in metric are leading the metric transition.

Amongst 215 U.S. corporations and 100 trade associations, about 65% believe that the metric system will be predominant by the year 2000.

In a letter to the American National Metric Council, President Reagan stated the issue of metric transition has become increasingly important for international trade and productivity.

U.S. Federal Government policy supports voluntary conversion initiated by the private sector, but there has been growing pressure from industry for more encouragement. The government has established a new policy to incorporate metric in purchase specifications for those products which can be anticipated to be offered in metric. To implement this policy, all federal

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150 to attend Metric Forum in capital

Some 150 representatives from a wide spectrum of Canadian society are expected to attend an all-day Metric Forum hosted by the Honourable Judy Erola, Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, in Ottawa on April 13, in Canada's Capital Congress Centre.

Mrs. Erola hopes to meet and exchange views with as broad a range of people and organizations as possible, in order to provide an opportunity for interest groups to express their positions on metric conversion.

As she puts it, "It is important that we hear from the many representatives within our society for whom conversion has been a logical progression, and indeed, is already a *fait accompli*. At the same time it is my view that those resisting metric conversion should be heard and engage in dialogue on the subject."

Three panels entitled, Metric International, Metric and Industry, and Metric and the Consumer, comprising four members each will examine the progress of metric to date within their spheres. In addition they will examine current and potential problem areas regarding conversion.

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Engineer's tips to stimulate export trade

In an address to the American Society of Agricultural Engineers, Page L. Bellinger, Manager of Engineering Standards for Deere & Company, offered tips to all companies conscious of the need to stimulate international trade:

- Encourage the rationalization and conversion of all manufacturers' steel inventories to preferred metric sizes.
- Encourage increased and aggressive efforts to use metric steel and fasteners for new designs.
- Promote the availability of preferred metric steel and fasteners from multiple sources of supply to all of industry.
- Continue to improve and use national and international metric standards.
- Encourage the use of metric dimensions in education and in general communications as well as using only hard metric dimensions on new designs. 

A meeting of the Ottawa Liaison Committee of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce with officials of Metric Commission Canada was held on February 29, 1984.

Officials of the Commission offered briefings to Chamber members on the Commission phase-out plans, sector

DEERE AND COMPANY

Metric commitment means overseas sales

Deere & Company, a multi-national manufacturer of agricultural, forestry, construction and earth-moving machinery, is "firmly committed to the metric system", according to Page L. Bellinger, the firm's manager of engineering standards.

Bellinger told a meeting of the Society of Agricultural Engineers in Chicago recently that "in order to compete in fabricated goods markets we must be able to profitably design parts in one country and manufacture, market and service them in other countries.

"This will be increasingly difficult, if not impossible to do in the near future unless those products are interchangeably metric."

The firm began its program of metric conversion in 1973 on its own initiative. Deere's U.S. and Canadian factories now have almost complete capability for manufacturing metric products, and Bellinger told the American engineers "We have had no major problems in the marketing area thus far, and do not anticipate any."

Bellinger said metric design was a key factor in a recent deal with

China. Deere & Company now has an arrangement to build combines using designs from its factory in Zweibrucken, West Germany, instead of inch-based designs from its U.S. factory. Bellinger said that metric design had a significant influence on the decision.


Conversely, he recalled that some time ago the perceived high cost of converting inch designs to metric prevented the company from entering into an agreement with the USSR for the Soviets to manufacture tractors of U.S. design.

"Deere has made good progress since 1973," he said. "Most new designs are metric and many of them are produced with metric steel and fasteners."


Bellinger said that Deere is the leader in the industry in the use of metric fasteners and in the development of fastener sizes and preferred sizes, while Caterpillar is the leader in the use of metric steel. International Harvester and Fiat-Allis have also been leaders in metric transition activities.

Some of those activities have realized significant economies. "One of our factories has reported annual savings of \$750,000," Bellinger pointed out. "Combining size rationalization with metric conversion, we realized a significant reduction in the number of steel sizes in our inventories."

Although Deere began its transition in 1973, the first metric products manufactured were a walk-behind tiller and two moldboard plows introduced in 1977 and 1978. That same year a Japanese manufactured tractor was introduced to the product line.

"Since then," says Bellinger, "we have continued to introduce metric designs and whole products which are predominantly metric. They include hay harvesting equipment, plows, planters, front-end loaders, consumer products, engines and construction equipment." 

support during the phase-out period, and an overview of the status of metric conversion in the United States.

The meeting concluded with an overall discussion of the status of metric conversion in Canada, including a discussion of current legal problems. 



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CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Task force to devise action plan to speed conversion

A task force is being appointed from among senior representatives of the construction industry to review continuing impediments to metric conversion in the industry, and develop a plan of action to overcome them.

The task force will be drawn from among architects, the Canadian Construction Association, the Housing and Urban Development Association of Canada, Public Works Canada, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the retail building supply industry.

The body was formed as the result of a recommendation from a recent meeting of the Construction Industry Coordinating Group in Toronto.


The Canadian Construction Association felt the short-term objective should be universal use of metric units throughout the industry. Conversion could not be concluded until all drawings for new design or renovation were exclusively metric and a supply of metric building products was consistently available.

500 g is a little more than a pound.

U.S. Metric Office has new director

The U.S. Office of Metric Programs has a new Director.

G.T. Underwood assumed the position of head of the U.S. Office of Metric Programs on February 6. OMP is an office of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Mr. Underwood, who had been Manager of Engineering Resource Planning for Deere & Company, was a member of the Board of the American National Metric Council. 

The Housing and Urban Development Association said education and awareness programs at the local and regional levels were necessary, and that support at this level was critical for the program to succeed.

While some residential designs and public housing units by larger builders are now in hard metric, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation said the lack of supply of metric modular building panels was a significant obstacle.

Public Works Canada has established the Inter-Governmental Construction Tendering Agencies Committee to promote building construction in metric and verify compliance to design. They too said the supply of metrically-dimensioned building units was a problem.


Saskatchewan 'metric' heifer brings top price

A lot of money — \$19,000 — changed hands for the top animal at The 1983 Canadian Western Shorthorn Sale at Regina.

Word of the transaction comes from Walter Scott of Georgetown, Ont., chairman of the Construction and Agricultural Equipment Sector Committee, and himself a spare-time gentleman farmer.


Mr. Scott advises that the 10-month-old prize heifer which commanded the \$19,000 price weighed 467 kg and was sold to Eldon Krebs of Gordon, Nebraska.

Raised by Ross and Vern Copeland of Prairie Lane Shorthorns, White City, Sask., the animal bears the impressive name PRAIRIE LANE METRIC MARBEL.

"It sure pays to be metric", mused Mr. Scott. 

Contractors and manufacturers have asked for a new sizing standard to be developed to permit interchangeability of wooden and metal doors and frames.

Electrical contractors felt their problems were primarily concerned with the practice of having to estimate and order materials in two different measurement languages.


Because of their contact with the general public, the retail building supply dealers feel this sector will have to use both metric and imperial units for some time, or until demand swings over to metric. They have, however, produced a Metric Use Manual for their retailers. 

\$700,000 sought in U.S. Congress for metric study

A bill introduced to the U.S. Congress calls for allocation of \$700,000 for a study of the extent of metric conversion in the United States and the impact on industry if the transition does not take place.


The Metric Evaluation Act of 1984 was introduced by Congressman George Brown Jr., to allocate funds for the study, which would also look at costs and import and export implications.

"We have little hard data on which to base specific conclusions about whether there is a need for stronger leadership and commitment by the government in this area," he said.

U.S. government policy supports voluntary conversion initiated by the private sector and Government agencies follow the lead of the industries they serve or regulate. The primary thrust of the government's metric activity is to identify and remove impediments to the use of metric measurement by the private sector. 

U.S. conversion seen inevitable

agencies responsible for preparing specifications and standards will carry out their reviews in anticipation of metric conversion. The Department of Defence, for instance, will carry out a review of all its standardization documents to determine which will need a comparable metric version, and will make these available by 1990.

In a meeting held in Washington, D.C. in January 1984, major corporate, and government metric coordinators from both countries reviewed the study findings and addressed the subject of U.S. constraints on Canadian sectors. Among the 17 sectors affected are air and rail transportation, packaging of fish, fruit and vegetables, heating and plumbing equipment, building and home hardware, some machinery, recreational equipment, electrical wire, aircraft and parts, radiological units, structural metals, and wood and fine paper products. Consensus was reached to jointly develop methods for removing constraints to metric conversion. 

1 cm is about the width of your smallest fingernail.

Export trade

Thin strips of leather, 2.5 millimetres in width, have brought success in the world of high fashion to Tannereye Limited of Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island.


Manufacturers of leather covered optical frames and sun glasses, Tannereye export 99.6% of their product and are under contract to fashion houses in France, West Germany, England, Italy, South America, Hong Kong, Japan and the United States. Along with such giants as Alcan Smelter, Spar Aerospace and Westinghouse, they were one of several Canadian firms to receive Export Success Awards from the federal government for their

It's in the can, say manufacturers

With the introduction of one and four-litre paint cans, Canadian can manufacturers feel that they have now completed the metric conversion process.

Paint cans had awaited a decision from the paint manufacturers regarding metric sizing. In all other areas, decisions had been made some time ago.


Oblong cans, and motor oil cans are in hard metric sizes. Round food cans have been soft converted, and labels indicate content measurement in metric.

The can manufacturers' committee has now stood down, but should unforeseen problems arise in future regarding metric conversion in this area, they would be brought before the Mechanical Manufacturing Group of Metric Commission Canada, made up of industry and government representatives. 

1 m (metre) = 100 cm (centimetres) = 1000 mm (millimetres).


activities in economic development and job creation.

"Metric facilitates us — it is the common language for international trade," states Michael Jardine, one of the founders of the company. "Our specifications and quotations for our European, South American and Pacific-rim markets are in metric measurements."

Tannereye was started five years ago by several Charlottetown entrepreneurs with \$7 500 and three employees. They knew they had a winner when president, Peter Leunes, developed a method for bonding leather to acetate. Today, Tannereye has 180 employees and sales are in excess of three million dollars. 

150 to attend Metric Forum in capital

It is also expected that representatives from other countries such as Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom and the European Economic Community will be in attendance to offer their perspectives on the progress of metric conversion within their respective societies.

Participants in the forum will also be examining the most expeditious methods to complete Canada's process of metric conversion. 

CGSB Anniversary

In 1984, the Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB), a national standards-writing organization, celebrates fifty years of providing standardization services in Canada.

As well as celebrating its Golden Anniversary, CGSB will be honouring David Wolochow, whose outstanding work as a long-time Secretary of the Board (at the time the chief executive officer) had a significant impact in shaping the direction of standards work in Canada.

Since its formation in 1934, CGSB specifications and standards development work has been carried out by consensus committee consisting of representatives from government, industry, consumers and labour interests and technical organizations. CGSB has been accredited by the Standards Council of Canada as a member of the National Standards System and has primary responsibility in Canada for more than seventy subject areas.

CGSB provides standards and, where necessary, certification listing of products and services for consumer requirements, legislation, technical practices, and test procedures. 