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Backgrounder - Market Survey

Canopy has showcased that a combination of pulps - including wheat straw, flax straw, and high quality recycled fiber - can provide a sustainable substitute for virgin pulp in printing and writing grade papers. Margaret Atwood, Yann Martel and Alice Munro and Canadian Geographic Magazine have each participated in successful paper trials. Tissue and packaging can also utilize non-wood fibre options. These trials demonstrate straw papers are feasible low carbon and 'greener' options than paper made from traditional wood pulp.

Agricultural residues are what is left on the field after the food harvest or other processes. They do not compete with the food supply and are not on-purpose crops. Fibers that can be used for paper products include cereal straws like wheat straw, rice straw, seed flax straw, sorghum stalks, sugar cane bagasse, and rye seed grass straw.

There are also 'on-purpose' crops that can be grown on degraded lands (so as not to compete for food producing farm land). These include sterile Giant Miscanthus grass, switchgrass and bamboo. In tropical countries there are many agricultural fibres aside from straw, bamboo and bagasse such as coconut husk fibre and pineapple leaves.

Canopy is also supporting innovative solutions for fabrics as part of our CanopyStyle campaign. Efforts are underway to explore the use of next generation solutions and agricultural residues for textiles. Companies are interested in alternatives to viscose sourced from ancient and endangered forests. Agricultural residues can be part of the solution. Feedstocks for fabrics may include flax, soy, bagasse, and hemp. New ventures have already developed methods to recycle used clothes into either new cotton thread or into viscose/rayon for fabrics. Microbial cellulose can also be grown from food waste and then be turned into viscose and rayon. Alternatives to using ancient and endangered forests exist. As the market sends even clearer signals those alternatives will leap from trail scale to market production.