Virgin vs. Recycled Fiber

AN UNNECESSARY BATTLE

Domtar
It all begins with paper.®

A LIFE CYCLE VIEW OF RECYCLED FIBER

Life Cycle Management is a "cradle to grave" approach to thinking about products, processes and services.[8] It recognizes that all stages of a product's life have environmental and socio-economic impacts. Any business can apply this concept to its decision-making processes related to environmental and product stewardship, product design and improvement. The life-cycle approach can also be used as a scientific tool for gathering quantitative data to inventory, weigh and rank the environmental impact of products and activities.

It's important that we all put more science into our sustainability models to ensure that we take informed positions. Domtar recognizes and respects that some will attribute more value to a specific approach to sustainability (e.g. forest certification, recycling, climate change, etc.).[9] But to take the position that recycled fiber is "better" than virgin is both unscientific and inaccurate. It doesn't take into account the life cycle of paper. While extreme positions make for catchy headlines, they do not provide a solution to the sustainability debate; instead, they add fuel to the fire.

Recent, peer-reviewed Life Cycle Management studies[10] have demonstrated that the environmental benefits of recycled fiber in the production of business papers can vary greatly depending on the source of the paper being recycled, its prior destination (landfill or another use), and the facility where it is being recycled into new paper (trucking distances and their impact on climate change). Domtar will continue to participate in the development of management tools that will take these factors into account, and will apply these tools, as they become available, to its decision-making process regarding the use of recycled fiber in its papers.

1: http://www.fscus.org/faqs/what_is_certification.php
2: http://www.wwf.ca/conservation/forests_freshwater/forests/index.cfm
3: http://www.paperonline.org/cycle/forestry/pulp wood_frame.html
4: http://www.afandpa.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Environment_and_Recycling/Recycling/Recycling.htm
5: http://www.paperonline.org/cycle/recycling/recycling_frame.html
6: http://www.tappi.org/paperu/all_about_paper/faq.htm
7: http://www.metafore.org/indexphp?p=Metafore_Paper_Fiber_Life_Cycle&s=570
8: http://www.ciraig.org/en/acv_e.html
9: http://www.metafore.org/downloads/epat_epp_defined.pdf
10: http://www.tappi.org/s_tappi/sec_publications.asp?CID=11031&DID=556827
http://www.tappi.org/s_tappi/sec_publications.asp?CID=11034&DID=556855

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