Industrial Hemp - A Versatile Plant

Essentially there are two fractions to the plant, Seed or Grain and Fibre. Some products made from the fibre include: all grades of paper, textiles, geo-textiles, structural reinforcement building materials, fibreglass replacement products, lightweight sandwich boards, composite boards, absorbency products such as kitty litter, potting mix, nappies and fem-care products and fuel.

Hemp seed whole, hulled or crushed for oil are used in food products such as muesli bars, cakes, breads, biscuits, butter paste, non-dairy milk, tofu and cheese, ice cream, the essential and cold pressed oils are used in cosmetics (such as shampoo, soaps and moisturisers), as well as having therapeutic qualities similar to evening primrose oil, cod liver oil, flaxseed oil and soybean supplements.

Viable fibre alternatives are needed as world population and fibre consumption increases. While the use of wood, cotton and synthetic products is being discouraged due to environmental concerns, the gap between supply and demand will inevitably increase. This factor is becoming more evident with the announcement in Japan that they are targeting that 10% of paper must be form non-wood fibres by 2005, in the EU 80% of car interior panels must recyclable by 2006.

These are but a few of the potential areas where hemp is already being used but present demand is having some difficulty in finding supply. Further, hemp fibre has been found to be a lighter, stronger alternative to fibreglass so it is for technical reasons as well as environmental reasons hemp is in demand.

From an agronomic and market point of view hemp is an environmentally friendly crop, which produces environmentally friendly products. It has enormous commercial potential and can be competitive on every level of production.

HEMP FACTS

- A Hemp crop produces nearly 4 (four) times as much raw fibre as an equivalent-sized tree plantation.
- Trees take approximately 20 years to mature… Hemp takes 4 months.
- Hemp needs no pesticides because it is unpalatable to insects.
- Hemp needs no herbicides because it grows too quickly for any weed to compete.
- Hemp paper does not need chlorine bleach, which heavily pollutes rives near wood-pulp paper mills.
- Environmentally sound Hemp paper is stronger, finer and longer lasting than wood-based papers.
- Hemp paper is used for bank notes and archives.

- Hemp uses the sun more efficiently than virtually any other plant on the planet.

- Hemp can grow in virtually any climate and soil condition, and is excellent for reclaiming otherwise-unusable land.

- Hemp seed does not contain the anti-nutrient trypsin inhibitors as found in soymilk.

- Until 1883, more than three quarters of the world's paper was made from Hemp fibre. Since the 1900s, all newspapers and most books and magazines have been printed on wood-pulp paper.

- "The earliest-known woven fabric was apparently of Hemp, which began to be worked in the eighth millennium (8,000-7,000 BC)" say Columbia History of the World 1981.

- For more than a thousand years until 1883 AD, Cannabis/Hemp was our planet's largest agricultural crop and most important industry for thousands upon thousands of products and enterprises, producing the overall majority of the earth's fibre, fabric, lighting oil, paper, incense and medicines, as well as being a primary source of protein for humans and animals alike.

- Hempseed oil is said to burn the brightest of all lamp oils, and has been used since the days of Abraham.

- Hemp offers a valuable and sustainable fuel of the future, "growing oil wells". Hemp has an output equivalent to around 5000 litres of methanol per acre year (10 tonnes Biomass/acre, each yielding 500 litres methanol/ton). Methanol used today is mainly made from natural gas, a fossil fuel. Methanol is currently being studied as a primary fuel for automobiles, hopefully reducing CO2 levels.

- Henry Ford dreamed that someday automobiles would be grown from the soil. The Ford motor company, after years of research produced an automobile with a plastic body. Its tough body used a mixture of 70% cellulose fibres from Hemp. The plastic withstood blows 10 times as great as steel could without denting! Its weight was also 2/3 that of a regular car, producing better economy. Henry Ford was forced to use petroleum due to Hemp prohibition.

- Hanf in German; Canamo in Spanish; Chanvre in French; Konoplya in Russian; Kender in Hungarian; Tal Ma in Chinese… Hemp is fully international!