

Newsprint and Newspaper Industry Environmental Action Group

Newspapers and the Forest

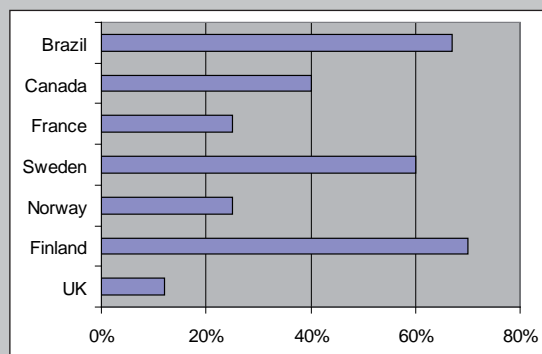
Industry's Commitment

Newspaper publishers are committed to promoting recycled fibre, and to using as much as possible in their publications. Although the UK's newsprint manufacturer's main raw material is recovered paper, they are still dependent on a continuous supply of new, virgin, fibre.

There is a simple explanation for this. Paper cannot be recycled indefinitely because the fibres wear out and have to be replenished. Papermakers have traditionally made use of the raw material that is most readily and economically available to them. In the case of the UK, this is recovered paper. With less than 12% (Defra 2005) of its land covered with trees it is an under-forested country.

Forest Cover Comparisons

Source: Defra



With a population of over 60 million people there is an abundant supply of used newspapers and magazines available to the industry. Imported newsprint from forest rich countries such as Sweden, Finland, Norway and Canada provide the fibres that are subsequently recycled and used by UK newsprint producers. Like us, these countries utilise their most plentiful raw material. They do make use of recovered fibre, but as they are sparsely populated it is not available in anything like the quantities generated in the UK.

Woodpulp

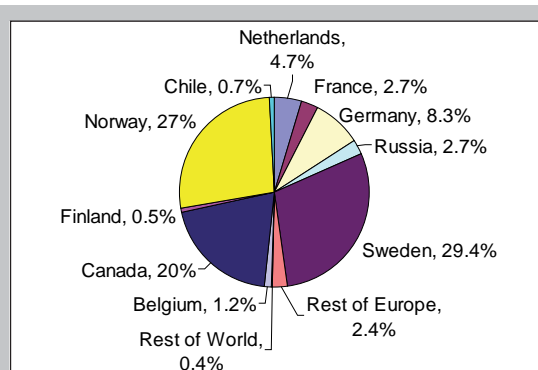
Newspapers are made from a type of paper called newsprint, and 59% used in the UK is imported. Imported newsprint is generally made from virgin woodpulp, although the amount of recovered fibre used by newsprint importers is growing.

Woodpulp comes from trees. The newspaper industry is one of many that primarily depend on forests for their raw material, each using the parts of the tree that best serves their purpose.

For example, the construction industry requires large cuts of timber whereas newsprint can be made from forest thinnings, small dimension timber and sawmills' waste.

Papermakers use a number of different pulps made from a variety of fibres, and each contributes particular characteristics to the end product. These characteristics are determined by a number of factors such as tree specie, climate and geographic location. Newspapers are made from softwood fibres.

Coniferous softwoods such as spruce, pine, fir and cedar provide long (average 3mm), strong fibres. Newsprint needs strength enough to withstand the demands of fast printing presses, the ability to accept high quality colour printing and enough opacity to prevent the printing showing through the pages.



UK Imports of Newsprint 2008 By Source

Total Imports: 1.2 million tonnes

Source: HM Revenue & Customs

Newspapers and the Forest

Woodpulp has been used to make paper since the late 19th century when it replaced rags. It has long been acknowledged (in Sweden in 1903, and in the UK as far back as the 1500s) that if trees were used without being replaced, our forest resources would diminish.

During post-war years, forests throughout Europe were intensively managed for their economic value, with the emphasis being on achieving the optimum timber yield. This approach was largely driven by the need to regenerate industries and economies that had been ravaged in previous war-torn years. The perception of sustainability was one of constant and continuous supply, and it was thought that as long as more trees were planted than were used, forests would last forever.

However, during the 1980s and 1990s, a new realisation dawned. At the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment & Development Conference in Rio, it was agreed that to be truly sustainable, social and environmental values had to be given the same status as economic considerations. Forest management practices began to change. Maintaining the bio-diversity (the maintenance of the conditions required by all the elements that depend on the forest for their existence) became as important as achieving the necessary yield.

Historically, forests were maintained to provide firewood, building materials, tools and timber for industrial processes. Most of the indigenous forest in Western and Central Europe disappeared a very long time ago. In Western Europe, only 1% of the forested area can claim to be original. Deforestation occurred at an alarming rate to meet agricultural and industrial demands, and by the 19th century, forests that once covered 80% of the land area had been reduced to less than 25%. Today, more than one third (215 million hectares) of Europe is classified as forest and other wooded land.

Forest management intensified after World War II, increasing the pressure on eco-systems, but throughout the 1970s, society's values underwent a major change. Environmental pressure groups successfully courted the media, politicians and the general public to draw attention to, and raise concern about, the growing exploitation of the Earth's diminishing natural resources.

Gradually, forest management objectives broadened from the narrow focus of timber production so that today, a planned programme to establish a new, or to replace a harvested forest, includes: site preparation; seedling establishment; tending of the young forest; intermediate thinnings; and the harvesting of mature trees.

The change in forestry management techniques over the past 30 years has been immense. Harvesting machinery has been designed to minimise its impact, and the size of areas earmarked for logging has been drastically reduced. Log debris, which at one time would have been removed, is left to rot to provide habitat for insects and to enrich the soil, and large areas have been set aside because they are special.

Sound forest management isn't always pretty, but a tidy forest is not necessarily a healthy forest. Certain species of trees and 'snags' are left standing to provide habitats for particular species of insects and birds. Areas are set aside for wildlife habitats and access corridors are created to enable animals such as deer to reach their seasonal feeding grounds. Roads are constructed as carefully, and unobtrusively, as possible.

Many variables need to be considered when managing a forest, for example climatic features, soil structures and vegetation, tree type, spatial arrangement of trees, harvest rate and harvesting methods, as well as road

All newsprint produced in the UK is derived from 100% recycled material



Forest Management Today

Forests are infinite and significant, and we cannot survive without them.

Forest management is defined as: *"The management of forested landscapes to provide a sustained production of a variety of goods and services for society."*

Newspapers and the Forest

and path access. The challenge is to strike the balance between the various economic, social and environmental considerations.

Maintaining biological diversity is a complicated process, and foresters need to fully understand the implications of their activities. The same level of biodiversity cannot be maintained on every hectare of forest. Some forests will be managed mainly for their timber yield, while some provide recreational pursuits such as hunting. Certain forests will be preserved for their unique eco-systems; multi-purpose forests will accommodate a number of activities such as commercial logging, recreational pursuits and wildlife habitat.

Some forests will be totally protected and preserved because they are unique; because they house very old, rare trees or endangered species. This does not mean they will not change; forests are always changing and natural phenomena such as fire and storms occur.

There is no doubt that industrial demand has impacted on the world's forests, but the stark reality is that very few trees would be planted if there were no economic incentive.

All Forests have Value

There are many different types of forest, and they each make a valuable contribution to the environment. In Canada alone there are eight distinct forest regions, each with their individual mix of species.

Every forest has its own distinct eco-system which means they need to be assessed and managed on an individual basis. Trees grow slowly in cold climates and are therefore very strong. They will be used in various industrial applications.

Single specie plantations are often grown on land that would be unable to sustain any other type of crop. These forests will be managed to provide raw material for industry and will often feature fast-growing species such as eucalyptus and acacia which can have an eight-year cycle. They provide fibres for papermaking, oils and honey, but such young trees would not be used to build houses. Plantations may not sustain the variety of wildlife that natural forests do, but they can contribute greatly to the demand for fibre and relieve the pressure on natural forests. All forests have value.

We Will Need More Trees

Forests are the Earth's lungs. They absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and emit oxygen. They help to control the climate and will have an increasingly important role to play in the battle to counteract global warming. They provide habitat for wildlife and plants, and foods such as berries and mushrooms. They inspire and provide solace. They must be valued.

As pressure mounts to set aside more and more forested land, more ways will have to be found to meet the demand of timber.

There are estimated to be 77,000 publicly owned (municipalities and communes) forestry holdings in Europe, with an average size of 1,200 hectares. The average size of private holdings (of which there are 10.7 million) is 10.6 hectares, although several million private owners have holdings of less than 3 hectares.

In Canada, most of the commercial forests are publicly owned either through provincial, territorial or federal government, although there are regional differences in ownership patterns.



"Forests are the Earth's lungs"

Newspapers and the Forest

Independent Assurance

Recognising the growing consumer interest in forests, the industry is increasingly making use of forest certification as a way of providing assurance of sound forest management practices. Forest certification involves an independent third party audit against a forest management standard.

For more information on Forest Certification, see the Confederation of Paper Industries' Forest Certification Fact Sheet, available from: http://www.paper.org.uk/information/pages/fact_sheets.html

Newspaper publishers and newsprint manufacturers have embraced and supported the development of national certification schemes. They are committed to using responsibly sourced raw materials and, in the case of woodpulp, they see forest certification as an ideal way of providing independent validation of this commitment.

The Confederation of European Paper Industries (CEPI) has developed a matrix that enables customers to compare fully operational and emerging schemes against a list of credibility criteria.

It is available from:
CEPI, 250 Avenue Louise, B1050 Brussels.
Tel ++ 32 2 627 4911 Fax ++ 32 2 646 8137
Website: www.cepi.org

Further Information

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*Recycled paper made up
76.2% of the raw material
for UK newspapers in 2009*

NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT
RECYCLING

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