

Where It Comes From; Where It Goes

Americans today are reading more than 63 million copies of daily newspapers and, every Sunday, over 51 million copies. Add to this 35 million copies of weeklies and by any measurement, that's a lot of newsprint!

Communication values aside, some environmentalists have expressed concern about the use of so much paper. Last year, for instance, total consumption of newsprint in this country came to 10.5 million tons. Over the past

decade, newsprint consumption has had a relatively steady annual growth rate of 3 percent.

Considering the variety of shortages facing the nation, coupled with environmental concerns, many people want to know where all the newsprint will come from. For that matter, are we depleting our forests to satisfy our hunger for news and other information? And what happens to all that paper once it's discarded?

According to the American

Paper Institute, the national trade association of the pulp, paper and paperboard industry, the major portion of newsprint used in the U.S. comes from sources outside the country—65 percent from Canada, 3 percent from overseas suppliers. The other 32 percent is produced by U.S. mills.

Groundwood pulp, made by grinding wood into very small fibers, is the basic raw material for newsprint. This type of pulp includes not only the cellulose fibers of wood but also other material forming the tree. This means the yield of papermaking fiber per cord of wood is roughly 50 percent greater than for papers made with cellulose fibers only. So fewer trees are needed for newsprint.

Whole logs, however, are not the only ingredient. In this country, some 25 percent of the fiber that goes into the production of newsprint and other paper is made from wood residues from lumber and plywood manufacturing. (Some major companies in western states are now using 75 percent wood residues to make newsprint.) Moreover, nearly 14 percent of all newsprint made in the U.S. is produced from recycling old newspapers.

In these times, when it is extremely important to get the most use out of fiber, many mills have reduced the weight of newsprint they produce from 32 pounds to 30 pounds per 500 sheets, thus using 6 percent less fiber for newsprint. Some newspapers have reduced their page size, gaining

further savings with no appreciable effect on their coverage of the news or advertising linage.

Despite all these conservation measures, there may still remain the question: Are trees in short supply? The answer is no. Unlike many of the nation's resources, trees are an endlessly renewable natural resource. On forest lands owned by paper companies the emphasis is as much on tree growing as it is on harvesting. On the 500 million acres of commercial forests in America (14 percent of which is owned by industry) we are growing 32 percent more wood than is being cut.

Nonetheless, the U.S. Department of Agriculture forecasts that as the nation approaches the 1990's, annual demand for timber could exceed annual growth. Two of the major solutions to the problem are technology and intensive land management.

For example, the roots and branches of the tree historically could not be used for paper-making, until modern technology stepped in. Today, using whole-tree chippers, some companies are converting entire trees to chips, right in the forest, for shipment to mills. And though this type of operation is now in its early stages, it has already been estimated that the process could increase the yield of the nation's forests by 50 percent to 100 percent.

Intensive land management is already a highly developed skill among industrial forest owners, who

are growing 52 cubic feet of wood per acre. The Federal government, on the other hand, the largest single land owner with 21 percent of the acreage, grows only 30 cubic feet per acre. Given adequate funds, Federal foresters could undertake the same kind of intensive land management as industrial owners and increase their timber production significantly.

Careful cultivation and harvesting of timber, however, is actually only half the picture. While some industry experts are looking ahead to plan for an adequate supply, others are concerning themselves with ways to utilize paper once it has been discarded. And these efforts are paying off.

For the first time in this century, wood residues, waste paper and secondary fibers (flax, straw, jute, and others) now constitute more than half of the country's fiber consumption. Waste paper consumption alone is expected to increase 5.7 percent this year and again

in 1975.

Newsprint itself is a valuable fiber resource that can be recovered before it enters the so-called solid waste stream. Separated from trash, old newspapers can be collected and sent to paper mills which turn it into new products. Contaminated by other refuse, they can be used as fuel to provide energy.

Last year, some 2.5 million tons of old newsprint - about 25 percent of the newspapers published - were recycled into new paper products, such as new newsprint, folding boxes, building paper and board, and many others.

Overall, the industry believes it has the answers to the future supply of newsprint and paper in general, because of increased recycling, the expansion of whole-tree use, a greater reliance on secondary fiber sources, and intensive management, hopefully of all commercial forest lands. But, the experts agree, the nation must give more support to community recycling programs and continue to harvest its new timber wisely.

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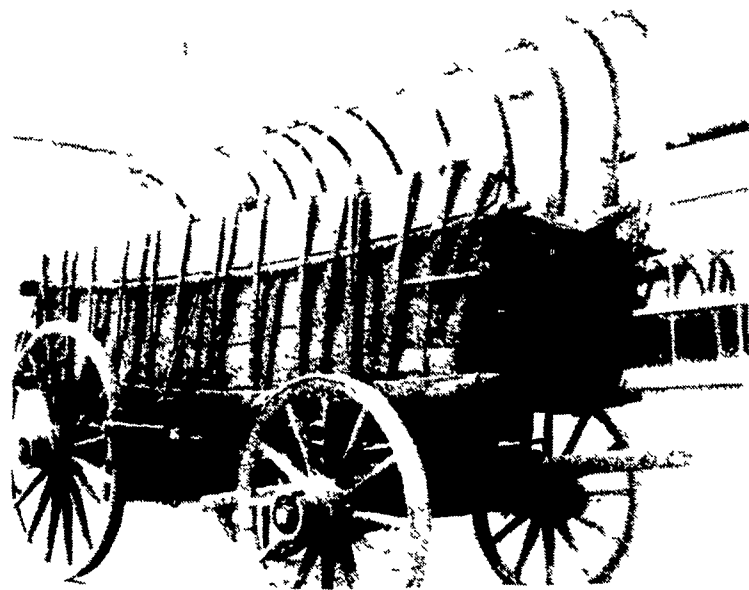
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This sale is being conducted by Martin Auctioneers, Inc.
Address all inquiries to: Larry L. Martin, 225 Jackson Street, New Holland, Pa. 17557