

# Field Day Proves 'Tree-Free' Paper Products Possible From Kenaf

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Mississippi State University Agronomist Brian Baldwin, in rain gear, holds up a kenaf stalk. Pulp paper can be made out of the bark. The wood is light, like balsa.

Harvest is about 6 to 6-1/2 tons per acre at a price of \$50-\$55 per ton. (A 6-ton yield is still considered poor, however, noted Baldwin. Paper processors want the harvest at 7 tons per acre non-irrigated and 10-1/2 tons irrigated.)

In a study, Baldwin noted inputs before harvest at \$180 per acre. That includes pesticide, fertilizer, seed, fuel, and other costs.

A preemergence pesticide can be used. The kenaf requires only 125 pounds of nitrogen per acre per year — that's it, he noted. Yet there has been some plant response to higher levels of potash, because kenaf "is a desert crop," Baldwin said.

This year, Mississippi crop yields are down because of the severe drought. "We're 25 inches off in rain this year," said Baldwin. "The drought is killing

us right now."

Pulp processors have been reluctant to adopt kenaf because it is lighter, not as heavy as the wood chips they're used to. But kenaf is a renewable crop that doesn't take decades of management that regular wood products used in paper production do.

Baldwin noted the Mississippi Delta Fiber Cooperative has been established to obtain markets for the product.

For more information about kenaf, contact Baldwin at (601) 325-8862 or e-mail at [bbaldwin@pss.msstate.edu](mailto:bbaldwin@pss.msstate.edu).

The fiber crop project was put together with help from the Solanco Young Farmers Association. For more information about the plot, contact Ed Herrmann, adviser, at (717) 786-2151, ext. 1453, or voice mail at ext. 2072.

## West Nile Virus Website Expanded

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Visitors to Pennsylvania's West Nile virus website — <http://www.WestNile.state.pa.us> — now can get weekly updates on the statewide mosquito surveillance effort; ask questions on an interactive message boards; and get detailed instructions on how to handle dead birds that could be infected with West Nile virus.

"Although the West Nile virus has not been found in Pennsylvania, birds carrying the virus have been found in New York and New Jersey," Health Secretary Robert S. Zimmerman said. "Through our website and our toll-free information line, 1-877-PA-HEALTH, we have been keeping Pennsylvanians up to date on the latest West Nile virus news."

A DEP representative involved in the surveillance program will answer questions live from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday on the message board. People can post messages 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

"Internet users can find information such as the number of samples taken in their county, test results and what their county is doing to sample and control mosquitoes," DEP Secretary James M. Seif said. Zimmerman said, "Also on the website are detailed instructions on how the handle and collect dead birds. Groups of dead

birds, especially crows, can be an indication of West Nile virus. If you see a group of dead birds in an area, please contact us so we can do testing."

Zimmerman said residents can call the toll-free information line, 1-877-PA-HEALTH, 24 hours a day if they have questions about how to handle dead birds. Direct assistance is available from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, and a Department of Health representative is available for emergency cases at other times.

The West Nile virus can spread to people and animals through the bite of an infected Northern house mosquito. Mosquitoes acquire the virus from infected birds. Previously, the virus only was found in Africa, Eastern Europe and West Asia. West Nile virus, when transmitted to people, can cause West Nile encephalitis, an infection that can cause an inflammation of the brain. Older people have the highest risk of developing severe illness because, as people age, their bodies have a harder time fighting off disease. People with compromised immune systems are at risk. However, anyone can get the virus.

You can reduce the number of mosquitoes around your home and neighborhood by reducing the amount of standing water available for mosquito breeding. From Pennsylvania Department Of Environmental Protection



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## Pa. State Plowing Contests Set

MANCHESTER (York Co.) — The Pennsylvania state plowing contests will be conducted on the Rentzel farm, one mile north of the square in Manchester on Rt. 181, in conjunction with Olde Tyme Days.

There will be a seminar on plow adjustment Thursday, Aug. 24 at 1 p.m. State plowing matches in small and large will begin at 10 a.m. Friday, Aug. 25. The open class will begin at 1:30 p.m. Friday, Aug. 25. The state

antique plowing match is 10 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 26.

There will also be horse and garden tractor plowing competition. There will also be flea markets, antique equipment displays, tractor pulls, and many other activities on the grounds.

Anyone interested in participating in any of the plowing matches or would like more information, contact Robert Miller at (717) 692-2443 or Robert Rentzel at (717) 266-4490.

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