

Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper – Submission IP05-01

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Myth Busting:

- It is impossible to get high from fibre hemp. Low-THC fibre hemp varieties developed by the French and others have been available for over 20 years. Over 600,000 acres of hemp is grown worldwide with no drug misuse problem.

Fuel & Industry:

- Farming 6% of continental Australian acreage with biomass crops would provide most of Australia's energy needs. 1

- Hemp is Earth's number-one biomass resource; it is capable of producing 10 tons per acre in four months. 1

- Biomass can be converted to methane, methanol, or gasoline at a cost comparable to petroleum, and hemp is much better for the environment.

Pyrolysis (charcoal zing), or biochemical composting are two methods of turning hemp into fuel.2

- Hemp can produce 10 times more methanol than corn.

- Hemp fuel burns clean.

- The use of hemp fuel does not contribute to global warming.

- In 1941 Henry Ford built a plastic car made of fibre from hemp and wheat straw. Hemp plastic is biodegradable.

- Almost any product that can be made from wood, cotton, or petroleum (including plastics) can be made from hemp.

- One acre of hemp produces as much cellulose fibre pulp as 4.1 acres of trees, making hemp a perfect material to replace trees for pressed board, particle board, and concrete construction moulds. 2

- Heating and compressing plant fibres can create practical, inexpensive, fire-resistant construction materials with excellent thermal and sound-insulating qualities. These strong plant fibre construction materials could replace dry wall and wood panelling. William B. Conde of Conde's Redwood Lumber, Inc. near Eugene, Oregon, in conjunction with Washington State University (1991-1993), has demonstrated the superior strength, flexibility, and economy of hemp composite building materials compared to wood fibre, even as beams. 2

- Hemp fibre has potential in the manufacture of strong, rot resistant carpeting - eliminating the poisonous fumes of burning synthetic materials in a house or commercial fire, along with allergic reactions associated with new synthetic carpeting. 2

- Plastic plumbing pipe (PVC pipes) can be manufactured using renewable hemp cellulose as the chemical feed stocks, replacing non-renewable coal or petroleum based chemical feed stocks. 2

- One acre of hemp can produce as much usable fibre as 4 acres of trees or two acres of cotton and can be cultivated in as little as 100 days and can yield 4 times more paper than trees over a 20 year period

- Hemp paper is longer lasting than wood pulp, stronger, acid-free, and chlorine free. Hemp paper can be recycled 7 times, wood pulp 4 times.

- Rag paper containing hemp fibre is the highest quality and longest lasting paper ever made. It can be torn when wet, but returns to its full strength when dry. Barring extreme conditions, rag paper remains stable for centuries. 2

- Hemp is softer, warmer, more water absorbent, has three times the tensile strength, and is many times more durable than cotton. Hemp production uses fewer chemicals than cotton. 2