

# DMA Advice for Protecting the Environment & Your Bottom Line

## – Where Paper Comes From: Virgin Fiber Sources –

As a direct marketer, you should look at your operations and seek ways to both improve profitability and help protect the environment. This fact sheet serves as a primer on virgin fiber sources, including where paper comes from, important definitions and resources, and questions you should be asking your paper suppliers.

### **What are virgin fiber sources?**

Most of the paper used today is made from a combination of hardwoods (e.g., oak, maple) and softwoods (e.g., spruce, pine). A special blend is processed for each type of paper desired. Hardwoods are generally used to produce writing paper, and softwoods generally produce shipping containers. One of the issues of most concern today is the safe and sustainable harvesting of these trees for wood products and paper pulp.

### **What is sustainable forestry?**

Sustainable forestry is harvesting and reforesting trees for our current and future paper & wood needs with the least amount of impact on the environment and our forest ecosystems.

Key principles include:

- Maintaining and respecting natural resources;
- Not harvesting at a faster rate than the forest's ability to regenerate through planting or naturally;
- Continuing to contribute to the diversity of the country; and
- Meeting the economic, environmental and social needs of people.

Direct marketers need to work with their suppliers to account for all sources of fiber, and to ensure that forests of origin are managed and harvested in a sustainable manner with the least impact on the environment and on the forests' ecosystems. Direct marketers should encourage their paper suppliers to increase wood purchases from recognized third-party forest certification programs.

### **What are forest certification programs?**

Forest certification provides an independent third-party assurance that a forestry operation meets previously defined standards set by the certification program. These standards strive to ensure the long-term health and productivity of forests for timber production, wildlife habitat and water quality.

Only a small percentage of the world's forests are currently certified. Increasingly, though, direct marketers have the option of choosing paper containing fiber from certified forests. While certification is an assurance of a certain level of quality, certification standards vary, and direct marketers and their paper suppliers must remain vigilant about monitoring paper sources.

**There are currently several forest certification programs in North America:**

- ATFS (American Tree Farm System)
  - the oldest certification system in the U.S.
  - includes a three-prong approach -- outreach, education and certification
  - [www.treefarmssystem.org](http://www.treefarmssystem.org)
- CSA (Canada Standards Association) International
  - [www.csa.ca](http://www.csa.ca)
- FSC (Forest Stewardship Council)
  - nonprofit organization that offers forest certification internationally
  - [www.fscus.org](http://www.fscus.org)
- SFI (Sustainable Forestry Initiative)
  - under the auspices of the American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA)
  - mandatory condition of membership, but also available to non-members
  - certifies public and private commercial forest land
  - [www.afandpa.org](http://www.afandpa.org)
- PEFC (Program for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes) Council is a global umbrella organization that has endorsed standards around the world including CSA and SFI.

**Sample questions you should ask your paper suppliers:**

- ❑ How much of the recovered fiber in the paper supply is certified as coming from sustainable forests?
- ❑ Which certification system has certified the fiber source? (e.g., FSC, SFI, CSA, ATFS, PEFC)
- ❑ If the fiber isn't certified, what is known about its source? Is its forest of origin managed by sustainable forestry practices?
- ❑ Is any of the recovered fiber in this paper from old growth forests?
- ❑ How can we ensure that the paper we use is not sourced from unsustainable or illegally managed forests?
- ❑ Do you have a system for mapping the chain of custody of virgin paper supply? Please explain it. How do you track your paper back to its source?
- ❑ What is the lightest-weight paper that will serve the purpose of this campaign? (The lighter the weight of the paper, the less fiber used.)
- ❑ Can we adjust the roll width and trim size of our catalogs to better fit the papermaking machinery, thus improving efficiency and reducing paper use and waste?

For more information, please visit us at: [www.the-dma.org/environment](http://www.the-dma.org/environment) for the complete *DMA Environmental Resource Guide for Direct Marketers*.