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Papyrus seeks to licence fibre breakthrough

FIBRE PIONEER
PAPYRUS Australia is seeking packaging manufacturers to exploit the light, strong, water-resistant and fire-retardant benefits of its breakthrough banana fibre packaging technology.



Ramy Azer, Papyrus Australia MD.

After long-term development, Papyrus can cite CSIRO testing which indicates that 100 per cent banana paper is much more water resistant – with a much lower water vapour transmission rate – than many traditional packaging materials.

Further CSIRO tests of packaging-grade papers with 20 per cent of banana fibre indicate a 23 per cent increase in tensile strength as well as 10 per cent increase in freeness – drainage – when making the

paper. This translates into increased production capacity or reduced costs.

Wooden packaging products in panel form made from banana trees also demonstrate remarkable fire-, moisture- and UV-resistance qualities.

Papyrus Australia managing director Ramy Azer says the company's product development had demonstrated the value that its banana fibre production process could deliver for the packaging sector.

"Beer cartons provide an excellent example of the benefits delivered by banana fibre," he says.

"Whereas traditional cartons are weakened by humidity and moisture arising from refrigerated storage, banana fibre boxes are both stronger and lighter and resist the weakening caused by moisture."

Azer says the Papyrus factory at Walkamin was committed to demonstrating the viability of its production process.

"We are focusing on low-volume, high-value products," he says.

"As a result, the development in Europe of the market for our products – panels, fibreboards and OSB – will happen very quickly, probably within the next six months.

"With packaging, our bottleneck is volume. To make beer cartons from banana fibres, it would take us years to produce the quantities required to meet demand from even the smallest breweries in Australia," he says.

"There is a volume hurdle the company doesn't want to jump now. We are not pretending that we can supply that market."

According to Azer, Papyrus is looking to licence people to use this technology, teach them how to use it and then let them build high-volume supplies to the packaging market. Anyone interested in more information can visit www.papyrusaustralia.com.au.