

Good afternoon my name is Toni Palmer and I represent the Pacific Fibre Corporation.

PFC was created only 3 months ago, however the company founders have been investors in the Hemp industry for several years (Unfortunately). Our first insight into the world of Hemp was through a meeting with a company called FibreNova. One of our founders had invested R&D money into the FibreNova fiasco a few years ago and was interested, after substantial donations, in knowing where the company was headed. Our research concluded that FibreNova was heading in a direction we neither understand nor liked.

Pacific Fibre Corporation's members are investors and business builders, therefore our people continued to research the Hemp industry and analysed the business opportunities in this field. Our findings led us to the very surprising and the very dynamic, re-created world of Hemp.

PFC is a brand new non-European player in the Hemp industry, and I understand that I am speaking to people here who are educated in the many aspects of Hemp whether it be agricultural or scientific. Nonetheless we are business people and have a capitalist approach to this industry, not one based only on environmental priorities. For us hemp is not a religion or the answer to the world's agricultural problems, nor does it have any bearing on global warming etc. If hemp can be grown and processed to provide products less expensive than those it aims to substitute, then it is relevant. If not, its environmental qualities are irrelevant to us.

I hope the film playing in the background is not distracting for you from listening to me. I am sure it is an old favourite. The name of the film is “Hemp for Victory” – a U.S government film made in 1942. Isn’t it interesting to study the historical data about Hemp, and the many centuries this fibre has been roped around our globe. Terrific to see the U.S spruiking Hemp. They too had ambitions for Hemp. The film narrator says “in this year of 1942 we have planted 14,000 acres by 1943 we want to plant 300,000 acres.” Sound familiar to you? Hemp is quoted in this film as being “indispensable” – but indispensable only because the cheap sources of south east asian supplies had been taken over by the Japanese. After the war, these trade routes were reopened - and with the advent of man-made petrochemical-based fibres – harvesting hemp was no longer actively researched in the US. So much for Western History – what about my history?

My history is in the fashion industry, as an owner, employer, designer, buyer and consultant. There is one thing that is certain about fashion. It revolves around and around and let me tell you...keep everything because it always comes back. There is only one thing that is original or new in the world of fashion...and I am certain...every one of you in this room is saying the word under your breath....Textiles...

Textiles define the fashion of the 21st century – they have to be, for there is simply nothing left that could be called fashionable...as everything else is simply a revised repeat. Every cut, stitch and style has been done. Every colour and every curve has been produced. Only the fibre blends, and the fabrics, are ever really new. And of course only some fabric developments are noticeable to the consumer – many

“breakthroughs” relate purely to costs – allowing existing functionality to be produced more cheaply.

Please come up to me after this presentation and correct me on any points where I may be wrong or where you disagree, but I have to say, while Hemp has had its moments of fashionista...the general consumer perception of Hemp from a fashion point of view is little better than hessian sacks. Thick, heavy, brown looking fabric...suitable only for your stallion's feed bags...certainly not for a dress.

Is this perception wrong? Can it be changed? Hemp can look quite beautiful. I do apologize to those who are not involved or interested in hemp textiles...but you can certainly see my point. As a novice to this world of Hemp...I now believe our wonderful friend hemp has a major image problem. Few would believe that Hemp could be blended with silk to be used as the fabric for a traditional Bridesmaids dress – which I have seen. I certainly would not have believed it 6 months ago !

Talking from the an Australian perspective, the development of a hemp textile industry is limited mainly for this very reason. And even if the image problem was addressed, where is the fabric manufacture going to take place?

99% of the textiles used in Australia are now produced offshore. There is hardly a cotton mill left. The fabrics we are accustomed to are from China, India or Europe. The consumer is educated to know natural fabrics are a better choice than synthetics, albeit a more expensive choice. So finally after the reign of polyesters and nylons consumers and designers are again favouring the natural fibres. The assumed primary

natural fibres are Cotton, Wool, Flax & Silk. What happened to Hemp? Let us put aside Du Pont's infamous man-made Nylon, and Mr Whitney's revolutionary Cotton Gin for a moment and ask how such an important commodity was lost to the consumer?

The well known and obvious answer is that hemp was lost because it became less profitable than cotton, wool, silk and flax – *and maybe this is still the case.*

We all know that Hemp is a difficult and expensive product to harvest. Traditional techniques are slow, polluting and weather-dependent. They also produce lower yields than should be possible. These are some of the underlying reasons why Hemp fibre is not normally considered alongside Cotton, Wool, Flax and Silk. Added to this is the general textile industry and consumer ignorance as to the types of light and fine fabrics that can be obtained from mechanically opened and chemically de-gummed hemp. Clearly, cost and quality failings have led to hemp not being given the respect it would otherwise deserve.

I have seen and compared Hemp that has been harvested green versus traditionally dew-retted and decorticated Hemp. Is the de-gumming process the key to achieving a finer thread? If so, which available method is preferable from a quality and cost point of view with regards to textile production – enzymes, caustics or even the much talked about explosive steam de-gumming? It has not been decisively determined anywhere in the world at this point as to which process is better for textile production, or even as to the better cost of production per dried tonne. I am still inclined to believe that a green harvesting process does give a finer textile fibre when spun, and also a

higher per hectare yield – but there is just not enough real, demonstrated results to compare, and not enough demand for the traditional hemp fabric products to justify the necessary expenditure to settle the matter.

I would be interested to hear your views on this topic. Has the technology improved for processing Hemp for textiles to the point where this new type of hemp fabric or sliver product has to be reappraised? Are the problems with the cotton industry getting so severe that governments and farmers are really looking for substitutes? Can the cost of hemp fibre production be reduced to the point where it is possible to compete on price AND quality with cotton? These are technological questions:

For a list of all the ways technology has failed to improve the quality of life, please press three.

Alice Kahn

Having mentioned dear Mr Eli Whitney (that poor fellow with such a brilliant idea and not a dime lined his pockets in the end from it) let us now look at the comparison between the cotton plant and the Hemp plant, because this is the section of the market Pacific Fibre Corporation is interested in – and only this...and the reasons are simple...**at the right price, Hemp would make a terrific substitute for cotton.**

Let me explain why – firstly aesthetically – the hemp fibre after green harvesting, degumming, aggressive opening and carding does look and feel like cotton. And it spins like cotton – with similar yardage per kilogram being achieved. We have been able to compare traditionally dew-retted fibre as yet for the full opening, carding and spinning process but will be doing so over the next few weeks. A week ago I plucked a sliver of 100% cotton from the Trutzschler Clean-o-Mat and compared it in my

hands to our 50% Hemp (green decorticated, caustic de-gummed) and 50% Cotton slivers such as the ones we are handing out today. The two were visibly undistinguishable.

Secondly – to make one cotton t-shirt a farmer would need the equivalent of 40,000 litres of water and our friend Hemp - the equivalent of alcohol that may be consumed at this conference – a mere 4,000 litres.

The old “Tree wool” is a difficult plant – needing vast quantities of pesticides and herbicides – our Hemp plant as we know – needs little of each of the two.

Even worse for Western growers and governments – cotton requires large quantities of fertilizers – a large portion of which are provided by the oil industry – to maintain the high yields necessary to continue to compete worldwide. The current situation cannot continue indefinitely – and the only place cotton prices can go in the long term is up. Of course, man-made fibres are also a product of the oil-industry, and these too must rise calamitously at some time in the future – when the oil runs out...

Herodotus – was quoted as saying in 445 BC – *there are trees which grow wild, the fruit is which is a wool exceeding in beauty and goodness like that of the sheep.*

Can you imagine what he would have said if he had found a plantation of Hemp (with a modern harvester/decorticator laying nearby). I will leave that to your imagination.

It is said the best type of cotton is the Sea Island cotton formerly grown on the East Coast of America, first introduced in 1786. It was superior because of its longer fibres, however it has ceased to be grown in commercial quantities. You do the math. Our friend the Hemp plant does have long, strong fibres. In a marketing capacity – if available at the same price or less than normal cotton, could a high-grade Hemp Sliver be compared in quality to Sea Island cotton? Could this comparison ever be realistic? We think so – and very soon.

Could I do a little research of my own right now in this room? Could I ask for a showing of hands – for the people here at this conference who are wearing Hemp on their back.

[IF YES *Get them to come up to the front,*

IF NO *not go on to say what a good example of the big image problems hemp faces as a textile...*]

My point is that hemp fibre can look terrific and can produce a fabric of high quality and superior strength and durability that can be re-marketed internationally. It is not difficult to dye and does not yellow in the sun as cotton does.

What a wonderful plant.

People here today are interested in the Hemp plant for many reasons. Some medicinal, some industrial...yet our organization is interested in the Hemp plant for one reason and one reason alone...textiles.

Pacific Fibre Corporation wants to find or achieve the highest grade of Hemp fibre possible... for the making of textiles.

We have brought with us various slivers of varying qualities of processed and unprocessed Hemp, and it is our aim to gauge whether we have the best quality available or whether any of you may be able to introduce us to something better – an end product or a process.

Quite simply we look forward to seeing your wares. We are buyers of high quality fibre – cleaned and dew-retted or de-gummed. We are keen buyers. And of course, we are also sellers of our end products – fine quality, low cost fabrics for clothing applications, and 100% hemp slivers for blending at lower costs than cotton equivalents.

And as the great man of cloth Oscar Wilde once said:

“Fashion is what one wears oneself. What is unfashionable is what other people wear.”

“The Book of Life begins with a man and woman in a garden, and it ends with Revelations.”