

Recycling Symposium balances research and reality

MATTHEW J. COLEMAN
TAPPI Director of Publications

The Second TAPPI Recycling Symposium was held in Boston on May 15–18, 1994. Cosponsored with the U.S. Forest Service, Forest Products Lab, the symposium continued the work of the first symposium held in New Orleans, LA. This year's program was expanded to three parallel tracks of sessions under the guidance of Richard Spangenberg, chairman, and Loreen Ferguson, technical program chairman.

With more than 400 in attendance and 31 exhibitors in the trade fair, the symposium provided an excellent forum for the exchange of the latest information in the secondary fiber/recycling arena. The addition of a special track for research organizations to discuss current projects provided an underpinning of new work, which complemented the technology discussions in the other two session tracks.

With a number of mills depending on secondary fiber for much of their furnish within a few hours' drive of Boston, the symposium and exhibit provided a convenient meeting point for industry technologists and operators. Their input during sessions was important and appreciated by the speakers.

Keynote speakers

There were two keynote speakers for the symposium: Adela Backiel, deputy assistant secretary of agriculture, and Richard E. Storat, vice president economics and materials, American Forest & Paper Association.

Backiel's opening keynote speech focused on the three strategies of the U.S. Forest Service and how these relate to the issues of recycling. The strategies are:

- Conservation
- Fostering ecosystem health
- Fostering partnerships which enhance the rapid transfer of technology.

Backiel dealt with the issue of resource exploitation with an excellent reference to the Turner Thesis. The idea that we can resolve our conflicts by moving on to new frontiers, needs to be changed from the physical frontier of the "wilderness" (which no longer exists) to the more conceptual frontiers of

Adela Backiel, deputy assistant secretary of agriculture, was the opening keynote speaker and discussed the new strategies of the USDA in regards to forestry operations.



technology and business.

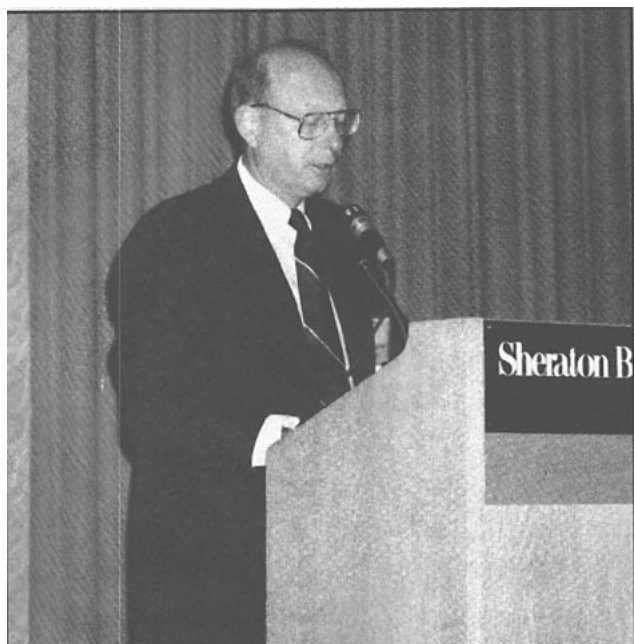
Her primary theme was the integration of economic and environmental health. She defined this as development which meets the needs of the present without compromising future generations' ability to meet their needs.

Storat—the second keynoter—spoke on the new industry goal of 50% fiber recovery by the turn of the century. Highlights of his presentation include:

- More than half of all newspapers are recovered and recycled—double the rate in 1985.
- More than 60% of all corrugated material used is recovered.
- The recovery of paper and paperboard packaging is at an all-time high—37% of all paper and paperboard packaging is recovered.

Conference Report

Richard E. Storat, vice president economics and materials, American Forest & Paper Association, was the second keynote speaker and spoke on the 50% recovery goal for the turn of the century.



Wayne F. Carr and **Michelle Raymond** discuss sections of Raymond's publication "State Recycling Laws Update" at the TAPPI PRESS booth at the symposium.



- Recovery of printing-writing grades increased by more than 50% between 1985 and 1992.
- The United States is now recovering 40% of all paper and paperboard Americans use, achieving the original goal for 1995 well ahead of schedule.

The new goal, 50% recovery, came as a response to the question: "Is there life after 40?" The answer was "yes" and the result was the 50% recovery goal. The additional 10% recovery will come with much more difficulty than the 40% recovery. In many grades, especially corrugated, we are at the limits of recovery now, and will have to begin the rather inefficient recovery of used corrugated material from the noncommercial (private household) waste stream.

Similar problems exist for packaging and paperboard, while deinking technology still limits recovery of mixed office waste and magazine paper. The 50% recovery goal is achievable, but will require more cooperation and coordination between the waste recovery system and the paper industry.

Program overview

Following the keynote speakers was a Blue Ribbon Panel, chaired by Russ Brown of the Finishing and Converting Division, which addressed the recycling issues which face the industry. The panelists were Virgil K Horton, AF&PA; Allen Hershkowitz, National Resources Defense Council; and Michelle Raymond, publisher of "State Recycling Laws Update." Backiel remained with the panel to answer questions.

As could be expected from his affiliation, Hershkowitz took a strong stance against the current practices and processes of the paper industry. Horton and Storat were quite

Elaine Cowlin, Fiber Systems Division, Beloit Corp., discusses the operations of cleaners with a visitor to the Symposium Exhibit. There were 31 exhibitors at this year's symposium.



effective (and seemed to enjoy themselves) in the role of industry advocates. The record of the paper industry is quite admirable in the recycling area and much of Hershkowitz's criticism was leveled at the areas where the industry has less control—such as in the recovery process for used paper, the location of mills, and in the social composition of a technical workforce.

Raymond presented the outlook for legislation which will affect the recycling efforts of the industry, and Storat focused on the progress made with the 40% recovery goal and the ongoing efforts of the industry.

The technical sessions began after the Blue Ribbon Panel. The papers are published in the *Proceedings* which are avail-

able from TAPPI PRESS (order code 01058994, member price: US\$ 86, list price: US\$ 128). The Monday sessions covered applications and research topics. Tuesday, in addition to the types of sessions covered Monday, there was a special session on University Research, chaired by M. Davis of International Technical Management Inc. and Jack Firkins, Boise Cascade Corp.

These research sessions provided opportunities for the research organizations to share information on topics, and provided opportunities for jointwork and avoiding duplication of effort. (See the sidebar by Tom Friberg.)

Results of the symposium

This year's symposium, the second recycling symposium sponsored by TAPPI, the Forest Products Laboratory of the USDA, and the Fiber Recycling Committee of the Pulp Manufacture Division of TAPPI, showed through the number of papers and the number of attendees that this meeting serves a genuine need for information transfer in the industry. In particular, because of the specific nature of the gathering, topics such as the research sessions, can be handled in a more efficient format than might be available in other conference venues.

In particular, this year's symposium resulted in the publication of six peer-reviewed papers in *Tappi Journal*, the publication of a set of significant body of work in the *Proceedings*, and the establishment of a forum for the exchange of research information. In parallel with, but not strictly a part of, the symposium was the publication of *Secondary Fiber Recycling*, edited by Richard Spangenberg and published by TAPPI PRESS.

The work of the chairman, the technical program chairman, and the Technical Program Committee in working to make this a significant event in this field should be commended.

The next Recycling Symposium and exhibit will be held in New Orleans, LA, on Feb. 20–23, 1995. Technical committees will meet the first day, with the symposium and exhibit opening February 21 as part of the Annual Meeting in the New Orleans Marriott. The chairman and technical program Committee are calling for papers to be presented at this symposium. Please contact Laura Feix-Baker, technical division administrator, at TAPPI, P.O. Box 105113, Atlanta, GA 30348, fax: (404) 446–6947. 