SUMMARY

The purpose of this literature review is to give an overview of how the cultivation of fibre plants such as industrial hemp and flax and the subsequent processing of the plant fibres will affect the fibre quality. Various parameters that are important during cultivation and processing are discussed as well as analysis methods and the subject of fibre quality itself.

The subject of plant fibre quality is a difficult one considering the sheer number of different quality factors and the inherently large natural variation exhibited by plant fibres. It is therefore important to realise that fibres that exhibit “high quality” in one aspect, for instance tensile strength, might be “low quality” when a completely different aspect, such as fibre fineness, is examined.

The fibre quality might be influenced by the choice of cultivar, methods of cultivation and harvest and by the post-harvest handling and processing.

Depending on which aspects are chosen to constitute high fibre quality, appropriate methods of analysis can be selected. These methods include tensile testing, near infrared spectroscopy and computer image analysis.