Paper from sugar cane saves trees and money

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(PhysOrg.com) -- A new way to make paper more easily and cheaply from bagasse, the fibrous sugar cane waste from sugar production, than from trees has been discovered by a Queensland University of Technology researcher.

QUT Sugar Research & Innovation research fellow Tom Rainey has dispelled the myth that bagasse paper production would never be economically viable in Australia.

Mr Rainey said bagasse could be used to make generic writing paper, tissues and packaging, and help lower the amount of plantation and old growth forest that was cut down for paper production.

He will discuss the innovative process at a talk on March 10 presented by the Sugar Research and Development Corporation (SRDC) in association with QUT.

"My research has overcome a major technical hurdle to optimising bagasse fibre so it can be made into pulp for the production of paper, board, structural and packaging materials," Mr Rainey said.

"This process will be more profitable because the raw sugar cane material is up to five times cheaper to buy than wood, and higher paper production rates are possible."

Mr Rainey said because the majority of generic-grade paper sold in Australia was manufactured overseas, this technology could provide a

new market for sugar cane growers.

Provided by Queensland University of Technology