Unit 6: Fiber

Lesson 3: Exploring Kenaf

**Purpose:** We have already learned how many fibers we are exposed to every day, but none are on the same level as cotton in terms of amount produced. According to the AgMRC website, cotton accounts for 35% of all fibers produced. Especially here in the United States cotton remains an important commodity, and we are able to be the world leader in cotton export! What does the cotton industry look like?

**Directions:** Access the commodities and products tab on the AgMRC website ([http://www.agmrc.org](http://www.agmrc.org)) and find the link to the fiber profile page. Utilize information located here to answer the questions below:

1. According to the AgMRC website, kenaf is native to Africa, is related to cotton and okra, and “is adapted to much of the southern United States and parts of California”. In relation to its origins, why would you expect it to be tolerant of southern U.S. climate conditions?

2. What are three uses of the “spongy core fiber” in kenaf plant stalks?

3. According to the AgMRC website, where are some current sites of commercial kenaf processing plants? Why would you expect these facilities to be located here?

4. Kenaf fibers can be processed into poultry house bedding. In which states would you expect there to be a big demand from the broiler industry? (Hint: Look up commodity poultry on the AgMRC website).

5. As of right now, the United States Department of Agriculture does not keep statistics on kenaf production. What could explain this?
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Reinforcement activity: How important is cotton?

Write brief paragraphs for the following two scenarios explaining what you think would happen if the scenario were to occur. Topics to consider are, markets (supply and demand), product availability, export potential etc.

Scenario 1: How would the world be affected if the cotton production were to double in the next year?

Scenario 2: How would the world be affected if the cotton production were cut in half in the next year?