**SSC Round 1 Follow-up Questions Oct. 4, 2017**

1) What is the current and projected inventory and production levels of Fresh Press? More specifically, is there currently excess stock, which is why you are hoping to generate more demand? If so, will you have enough supply to keep up with an increased demand? What is your estimated full operating capacity, and have you found any wholesalers/buyers who could sustain your production? What is currently done with the excess inventory?

**Currently we are offering a total of 45 shares of paper/produce for the Fall 2017 CSA offering. We have around 31 in inventory ready to go and have 14 reserved for pick-up by faculty, staff, and students on our official launch date of October 5, 2017.**

**From the Spring 2017 CSA offering we did not sell around 12 shares of our Composition Share that we will hopefully sell instead at a local gallery in Urbana in November. We have a written agreement with this gallery.**

**We also have produced excess inventory of single sheets of paper and art prints that we sell (outside of the Fiber CSA) at the SSF Farmer’s Market, maker fairs, and pop-up shops on campus. We hope to always have extra of this type of inventory beyond our CSA to offer in different quantities and styles to campus and beyond.**

**As students are our core, we collectively make decisions on what to make, price, and where/how to promote. We have had a learning curve in all of these three areas since the inception of the Fiber CSA project, but feel now with more experience and a stable staff, we are ready to grow and streamline the endeavor. This belief is held based on not only the recent wholesale agreement we signed (via the University) with Hopscotch Bakery in Champaign, IL, but also from other similar arrangements we are currently negotiating.**

**We also spent a portion of the summer working with [Dr. Kathryn Buford](http://kathrynbuford.co/) from the University of Maryland, who specializes in social entrepreneurship. She provided a great deal of help to aid us in better communicating our project and reaching our audiences more effectively through social media and in-person events. This led to the redesign of our website and a change on how we write about and promote our offerings. You can see this at: [www.freshpress.studio/fiber](http://www.freshpress.studio/fiber). She also encouraged us to increase our presence at local maker fairs to take advantage of other venues where our core audience goes. Our first table at a maker fair in Urbana this August proved to be a great success and we are signed up for two more (October and December). Furthermore, we are using her idea of a launch party on October 6 at Fresh Press to continue every Friday going forward this term, which we are calling “Fridays at Fresh Press,”**

**With all that being said, we are not financially sustainable… yet. However, through the help of Dr. Buford’s advice, our clearer picture of our consumers, and new sales venues and community partners, we feel we can soon reach that goal. We believe that we will increase demand via these new opportunities, and will also need to add some more student workers. Currently we have more interest in working at Fresh Press than we have room, so we don’t believe recruitment will be an issue once we blossom to where you and we want us to be. Our operating capacity could increase if we receive appropriate funds that allow us to expand and work efficiently and if our workers are fully trained**

2) Is this, in your opinion, the best use of the agriculture waste (at any scale)? Would it

not be better used in a compost environment? What is currently done with the leftover

agricultural waste/fibers?

**The vast majority of all agricultural waste (corn stover, soy stalks, pepper and tomato vines, etc.) is needed for soil nutrition. In a 2006 [USDA study](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/nrcs142p2_053253.pdf), however, the USDA found that up to 30% of the biomass from the harvest could be used for alternative uses like biofuel, or in our case paper. At the Sustainable Student Farm, Manager Matt Turino tills under most of his harvest remnants for soil nutrition. However he does not need 100% of it for if he did, he would not allow us to take the amount that we do. For five years now we have been working together to explore how any excess can be used to create a viable alternative to tree fiber paper.**

**Beyond agricultural waste, Fresh Press utilizes dried prairie grasses that are cut down and many times burned. We get these native grasses from the SSF and donations from the campus and community. We also use miscanthus grass excess from the biofuels farm on campus.**

**In North America over 200 million tons of agricultural residue remains as a by-product of the crops of wheat, rice, rye, corn and grass seed. (US Dept. of Energy). From a bigger perspective, selling this fiber residue to paper mills can help our farmers economically, restore wildlife, reduce air pollution, and save trees by replacing wood fiber for making paper and packaging. This is better for us and the environment. In a recent lifecycle study by Step Forward Paper, wheat straw (or the remnants of the wheat harvest) paper was shown to have *less than half* of the negative impact on the environment in comparison to 100% virgin tree fiber paper. Their wheat straw paper was 80% virgin tree fiber and 20% wheat straw. We believe that our locally harvested agricultural residue fiber paper will have an even less environmental footprint since it contains no tree fiber.**

**Just this week in the state of Washington, a paper mill ([Columbia Pulp](http://www.columbiapulp.net/)) dedicated to agricultural residue broke ground. This is largely due to environmental non-profit Canopy’s “[Second Harvest](http://canopyplanet.org/campaigns/second-harvest/)” campaign. We feel that any excess agricultural residue should be used for something productive to help slow climate change by replacing tree-fiber paper products.**

3) SSC currently owns 12 bikes, could this be a substitute for the bike you have

proposed to purchase in you grant?

**Yes, that would be fantastic! Reuse! We would still want to buy the carrier to tow our paper and supplies to the Quad however. Do you feel that is ok?**

4) Is a third-party LCA the only viable option? Is there a department on campus who

could produce a comparable evaluation? This could provide the added benefit of student

involvement and education, if feasible, and could reduce the cost for the LCA.

**We have reached out to ISTC on campus with this very same question and learned that it is beyond their expertise. We then contacted three LCA consulting companies and received quotes ranging from $8,500 to $38,000. We have just recently emailed Professor Madhu Khanna at iSEE to see if this is something she or her students would be willing and capable of helping with. She replied saying she was interested, but not until Fall 2018. She recommended a few other faculty that might help in Spring 2018, and we will need to reach out to them this week.**