



Excel Erosion  
Education Circular

E<sup>3</sup>C

Volume 1



"Blanketing Nature with Nature"

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## E<sup>3</sup>C Volume 1 - Comparison of Straw Blankets

E<sup>3</sup>C is produced by Western Excelsior to provide accessible, reliable education regarding erosion control and Rolled Erosion Control Products (RECPs). E<sup>3</sup>C covers an array of topics critical to the RECP industry today. Volume 1 focuses on temporary straw blankets and a means to compare various products to make informed choices.

### Introduction

With any transaction, customers often spend agonizing moments trying to determine which product or service to purchase. Without discernible differences, choosing one competing item over another is often a difficult decision. However, virtually all customers are familiar with two time tested truths:

- 1) You get what you pay for.
- 2) Doing a job right the first time is always cheaper than doing it twice.

In the case of temporary erosion control products, the choice between competitors is often very difficult. However, in a climate of heavy environmental regulation, litigation and fines, sub-standard materials provide only unnecessary risk of failure. With an abundance of available products, and little obviously separating the contestants, price becomes the deciding factor. This article has been developed to help contractors, specifiers and stakeholders of the erosion control industry get what they pay for and save money by doing the job right the first time.

### What is Performance?

There is an old saying in erosion control: "Everything Works Once". Invariably, the argument of past use is used to justify the purchase of inferior materials. A contractor can often have false confidence in a brand because they have never experienced a problem. However, under conditions where no significant rainfall tests an

installation, or an inspector did not evaluate the results, some inferior products are not exposed.

Erosion control products are judged on the broad term, Performance. Performance relative to a given product can have different meanings. In the case of straw blankets, the ability to reduce erosion on slopes and channels and establish vegetation is the measure of performance for the material. Each material will have a unique performance threshold and unique means of achieving its maximum performance. The material with the greatest performance and the best price provides the most value.



### How to Achieve Performance

Performance in erosion control materials is achieved by using quality component materials in a carefully monitored, regulated manufacturing process. Straw blankets are comprised of three principle component materials: netting, stitching and the fiber matrix.

Purchasing netting and stitching materials from reputable, long standing manufacturers of these products provides confidence in source components. Additionally, regulation of the properties of all component materials ensures consistent quality. However, not all straw fibers are created equal. As a critical component of each straw blanket, the quality of the straw fibers comprising the matrix dictate a significant portion of the quality of the product. Fibers that are wet or old fail to provide the longevity and performance of fresh, clean and dry straw fiber. Further, type and origin of the straw fibers provide varying degrees of performance and vegetation establishment. Finally, mold and

weed seed can be prevalent in low quality straw blankets.

### How to Measure Performance

Measuring the performance of an erosion control material is the first step to providing confidence and value to customers. Many manufactures do not allocate the resources necessary to determine the performance of the materials they produce. Thus, the manufacturer can not provide reliable advice on how to use or install the product, leaving the specifier and contractor in the dark.

Performance can only be measured by testing full scale products in full scale laboratory applications. Western Excelsior uses state of the practice protocols to execute the most rigorous testing available to the entire EXCEL line of RECPs. EXCEL straw blankets are laboratory tested and field proven to provide performance.



### Regulation and Certification

Virtually every state maintains a specification or approved/qualified products list for temporary ECBs. Some agency requirements are rigorous, while others lax. However, federal law and specifications provide mechanisms for inspections and fines, regardless of state requirements.

Many contractors do not fear inspection or fines

until it's too late. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Department of Transportation fines are real and reported every day across the country. EPA fines have been levied against contractors for tens of thousands of dollars and against project owners for millions. Additionally law-breaking inspectors and contractors have been jailed.

Thus, it is imperative to the contractor that materials used on the job site meet regulatory compliance. Proven, engineered construction materials are compliant with more specifications and less affected by changes in regulations. When the inspector comes, who is on your side?

### The Excel Advantage

Western Excelsior manufactures a full line of straw blankets. Single and double netted, regular degradable, rapid degradable and bio-degradable varieties are all available.

An evaluation of all the refereed, publicly available data shows Excel straw blankets provide germination rates averaging nearly 40% higher than average straw blankets. Further, Excel straw blankets erosion control performance is equal to or greater than virtually all published specifications for straw blankets. Finally, Western Excelsior stands behind every roll of Excel straw blankets with service and expertise.

By using the highest quality components and the tightest manufacturing specifications possible, Western Excelsior provides the highest quality, performance and value. Excel products are available coast to coast and backed by a diverse distributor network, Western Excelsior Quality and Excel Expertise.

Excel straw blankets are engineered for performance, manufactured for quality, laboratory tested and field proven. Rest easy, choose Excel.



Excel SR-1



Excel SR-1  
Rapid Go



Excel SR-1  
All Natural



Excel SS-2



Excel SS-2  
Rapid Go



Excel SS-2  
All Natural



"Blanketing Nature with Nature"

