

Random House shifts on its FSC paper use

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Random House has stopped printing its mass market paperbacks on Forest Stewardship Council-certified paper, citing supply problems. Random's policy for 2009 is to print only its hardback and trade paperbacks on Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) paper, but not its B and A-format editions. Last year Random printed only its A-format books on FSC, and in 2007 only its B-formats.

Stephen Esson, group publishing operations director, said: "As the availability of FSC paper is limited and as the book paper market and supply fluctuates we have to review annually which of our editions can be produced using FSC paper." He added: "While our arrangements may change year to year with varying supplier changes, what remains unchanged is our commitment to the FSC and our ambition that one day 100% of our titles can be produced on FSC papers. To this end we are committed to working with our paper suppliers, the FSC and any other interested parties to resolve any supply impediments and to broadcast the credentials of the Forest Stewardship Council."

Rosie Teasdale of the Forest Stewardship Council confirmed that there had been "a significant increase" in demand for FSC paper over the past two years. "A lot of publishers have managed to source it adequately but they may have to look further afield," she said.

Ian Foyster, m.d. of printer William Clowes, said: "It is getting more difficult to source FSC [paper] because capacity is closing."

However Shaun Hodgkinson, purchasing director at Penguin, said there was no change to the publisher's policy of using FSC paper for all of its black and white printing. "For our four-colour printing, we endeavour to obtain FSC paper where we can. For monochrome, we have managed to obtain the tonnage we require," he said. "My personal experience when I've come to negotiate for [paper supplies] is that it isn't any easier or more difficult to obtain FSC now than it has been." A spokesperson for HarperCollins said: "We are not experiencing problems with FSC supply or cost at present."

Faber production director Nigel Marsh said: "We're using FSC paper where we can. There is a 3% to 5% surcharge attached which makes it more difficult. It is much more popular among publishers now and supply is always a little bit more shaky—there are just not enough forests that have that accreditation, although they are increasing and it will balance out over time."

Helen Fraser, Penguin UK m.d. and chair of the BA/PA Environmental Action Group (EAG), said: "At the EAG we are very much in favour of certified papers and FSC seems to be, for many small or large publishers, the paper of choice. I haven't been made aware of problems with the supply of FSC but we may be victims of our own success. FSC paper does carry a surcharge."

Source: www.thebookseller.com