

ABSTRACT

The tanning industry can contribute significantly to the pollution of land, sea and air, especially within countries having clusters of tanneries within densely populated environs. In fact, it had the reputation in the past of being one of the filthiest, most vile smelling of industries. Modern tanneries however have adopted cleaner technologies to address these issues.

Intrinsic to the production of leather, whether at the soaking stage or fleshing stage is the generation of significant volumes of solid and liquid wastes. As a direct result of the vast quantities of inorganic and organic wastes generated and the perceived and confirmed high costs of mitigation, many small and large tanneries would rather not even address the issue.

The aim of this report is to create the framework for an Environmental Management System for a small tannery in Jamaica. Liquid and solid wastes generated by the company within the beamhouse were characterized so as to more adequately assess the risks associated with the current absence of a structured environmental plan. Furthermore, knowledge of the actual pollutant levels and their modes of discharge will only assist senior management choose the most feasible and appropriate mitigation methods.