

## Oil spill: Fibertect wipe gets USEPA approval

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VIRGINIA, USA (Commodity Online): The Fibertect Cotton-Soaking developed by Texas Tech University's The Institute of Environmental and Human Health (TIEHH) which may prove useful in mopping up the oil spill at British Petroleum's Deepwater Horizon disaster has received official approval from United States Environmental Protection Agency.

The product, a three-layer flexible, inert, non-woven, non-particulate decontamination system has been proved successful in absorbing chemical warfare agents for the US military. The technology was developed by Texas Tech University Associate Professor Seshadri Ramkumar and is manufactured by Hobbs Bonded Fibers for First Line Technology.

The three layers of material consist of a top and bottom fabric with a center layer of fibrous activated carbon that is needle punched into a composite fabric. The top and bottom layers provide structural coherence, improving mechanical strength and abrasion resistance while the center layer holds volatile compounds, like oil. Ramkumar said according to documented research published by many scientists, raw cotton can absorb up to 20 times its weight. But when chemically modified the material can hold more than two to three times that amount. And unlike synthetic materials like polypropylene that are currently used in many oil containment booms, Fibertect® made from raw cotton and carbon is biodegradable.

"Fibertect® has already proven to be effective in the bulk decontamination of chemical warfare agents and toxic industrial chemicals, but our proposal here is to use it to aid in the clean-up efforts in the Gulf," said First Line Technology President Amit Kapoor. "Fibertect® allows for a green, environmentally safe, biodegradable technology that is perfect for the expanding effort to protect and decontaminate coastal lands and wildlife. We welcome the opportunity to work with the government, BP, or other oil companies in a joint effort to defend and preserve our planet."