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Title: Isolation and characterization of Cellulose nanofibrils from Colombian Fique decortication by-products

Authors: S.A. Ovalle-Serrano, F.N. Gómez, C. Blanco-Tirado, M.Y. Combariza

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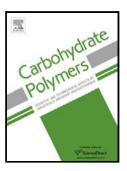
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## ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT

# Isolation and characterization of Cellulose nanofibrils from Colombian Fique decortication by-products

Ovalle-Serrano, S.A.<sup>2</sup>, Gómez, F.N.<sup>1</sup>, Blanco-Tirado, C.<sup>2</sup>, Combariza, M.Y.<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Escuela de Ingeniería Metalúrgica y Ciencia de Materiales, <sup>2</sup>Escuela de Química, Universidad Industrial de Santander, Bucaramanga, Colombia, 680002

\*E-mail: <u>marianny@uis.edu.co</u> Tel: +57 (7) 6344000 ext. 2795

Isolation and characterization of Cellulose nanofibrils from Colombian Fique decortication by-products

#### Highlights

- 1. Cellulose nanobribrils (CNF) from Fique tow were extracted using TEMPO
- 2. Ultrasound-assisted TEMPO greatly influence DO and colloidal stability of CNF.
- 3. Figue CNF exhibit similar properties to CNF from different biomass sources.

#### **Abstract**

Fique fibers are extracted from *Furcraea spp* leaves, with 5% average mass yield, using mechanical decortication. Juice, pulp and tow, the by-products of this process, amount 95% of the leaf weight and are considered waste. We extracted cellulose nanofibrils (CNF) from Fique tow, via ultrasound-assisted TEMPO followed by mechanical disintegration with sonication. Fique CNF exhibit diameters around 100 nm, degree of oxidation (DO) of 0.27 and surface charge density ( $\sigma$ ) of 1.6 mmol/g. Fique CNF aqueous suspensions show optical birefringence and high colloidal stability due to a high  $\zeta$  potential (–53 mV). The morphology, chemical structure, crystallinity and phase transitions of Fique CNF were studied using FESEM, IR-ATR, XRD and TGA. We observed that the delignification pretreatment and the TEMPO reaction assisted by ultrasound significantly increase Fique CNF  $\sigma$  and  $\zeta$  potential, in contrast with the oxidation carried out without ultrasound or with raw (lignified) tow.

## Keywords

Natural fibers; Fique fibers; Fique tow; cellulose nanofibrils (CNF); ultrasound-assisted TEMPO.

#### 1. Introduction

Socio-economic and climate change issues are compelling governments and companies to promote sustainable growth based on transformation of low-cost and renewable resources (García et al. 2016). Agro-industrial residues, widely distributed, abundant and biodegradable may play an important role in a sustainable future

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