CLAIMS

1. A method of making a reconstituted tobacco sheet, comprising:
preparing a dispersion of tobacco stems or stalks in a liquid, the dispersion having a consistency of at least about 10 percent by weight;
refining the tobacco stems or stalks in the dispersion to obtain a pulp suspension having a freeness (drainability) of at least about 30 degrees Schopper-Riegler and comprising tobacco stem or stalk refined fibres having a length of at least about 300 micrometres dispersed in the liquid;
combining the pulp suspension with tobacco cast leaf material to obtain a slurry; and
forming a sheet from the slurry.

2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the consistency of the dispersion of tobacco stems or tobacco stalks is at least about 15 percent by weight.

3. A method according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the consistency of the dispersion of tobacco stems or tobacco stalks is at least about 20 percent by weight.

4. A method according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the tobacco stems or tobacco stalks in the dispersion are refined to obtain a pulp suspension tobacco stem or tobacco stalk refined fibres having a length of less than about 1200 micrometres.

5. A method according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the step of refining the tobacco stems or tobacco stalks comprises a first step of refining the tobacco stems or tobacco stalks between discs separated by a first gap and a second step of refining the tobacco stems or tobacco stalks between discs separated by a second gap smaller than the first gap.

6. A reconstituted tobacco sheet having a basis weight of less than about 14 grams per square foot (about 151 grams per square metre) and comprising tobacco stem or tobacco stalk refined fibres having a length of at least about 300 micrometres and tobacco cast leaf material.

7. A reconstituted tobacco sheet according to claim 6, the sheet having a basis weight of less than about 11 grams per square foot (about 119 grams per square metre).

8. A reconstituted tobacco sheet according to claim 6 or 7, wherein the tobacco stem or tobacco stalk refined fibres have a length of less than about 1200 micrometres.

9. A reconstituted tobacco sheet according to any one of claims 6 to 8, wherein the tobacco stem or tobacco stalk refined fibres account for at least 30 percent by weight of the sheet.

10. A reconstituted tobacco sheet according to any one of claims 6 to 9, wherein the tobacco stem or tobacco stalk refined fibres account for at least 40 percent by weight of the sheet.

11. A reconstituted tobacco sheet according to any one of claims 6 to 10, the reconstituted tobacco sheet having a tensile strength of at least about 25 kilogram force per meter (about 245 Newtons per meter).

12. A reconstituted tobacco sheet according to any one of claims 6 to 11, the reconstituted tobacco sheet having a tensile strength of at least about 30 kilogram force per meter (about 294 Newtons per meter).

13. A smoking article comprising reconstituted tobacco sheet material, wherein the reconstituted tobacco sheet material has a weight of less than about 14 grams per square foot (about 151 grams per square metre) and comprises tobacco stem or tobacco stalk refined fibres having a length of at least about 300 micrometres and tobacco cast leaf material.

14. A smoking article according to claim 13, wherein the reconstituted tobacco sheet material has a tensile strength of at least about 25 kilogram force per meter (about 245 Newtons per meter).