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Don't Mix Politics and Biodiesel

There are many political reasons why biodiesel making has captured the attention of both major fuel manufacturers and those who prefer to make their own homemade biodiesel. Many car manufacturers are seeing the wisdom of creating vehicles that can accommodate a biodiesel product by creating a diesel car that is friendly to the use of vegetable oil blended with diesel fuel.

Perhaps one of the biggest benefits to biodiesel making is that it helps to reduce the United States dependence on foreign supplies of oil. Making your own biodiesel is also a way of keeping your costs down in the case of a national emergency such as the devastating hurricanes that recently hit the Gulf coast.

Biodiesel making also keeps farmers employed. Biodiesel production is self-sustaining because it is a completely renewable resource. Biodiesel product is made from soya and canola, which is a self-sustaining fuel. Best of all it provides a market for excess soya bean oil production.

Unlike the burning of fossil fuels biodiesel making gives back more energy to the environment than it takes. Lifecycle studies show that for every unit of fossil energy it takes to manufacture fossil fuel, 3.2 units of energy are gained during the biodiesel making life cycle. This kind of lifecycle study would take into account the planting and harvesting of the soy or canola as well as its transportation, production and distribution to the end user.

In addition to displacing North America's reliance on imported petroleum, the use of a biodiesel product has been shown to reduce air pollution and greenhouse gases. According to the national biodiesel board a 1998 biodiesel lifecycle study, jointly sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, concluded biodiesel reduces carbon dioxide emissions by 78 percent (compared to petroleum diesel.)

The total fossil energy efficiency ratio of the production, manufacture, transportation, and distribution for diesel fuel and biodiesel shows that biodiesel (diesel gas blended with vegetable oil) is four times as efficient as diesel fuel.

Burning just a 2% biodiesel blend in on-road diesel fuel will curtail all kinds of harmful emissions. Annually it has the potential to reduce poisonous carbon monoxide emissions by more than 35 million pounds, reduce ozone forming hydrocarbon emissions by almost 4 million pounds, reduce hazardous diesel particulate emissions by almost 3 million pounds and reduce acid rain-causing sulfur dioxide emissions by more than 3 million pounds. Given these statistics about biofuel product it is quite baffling why more politicians don't endorse biodiesel making as part of their political platform.

Biodiesel product is available commercially but it is not available readily to everyone. This is possibly because the major gas companies are all too well aware that biodiesel making cuts into their profits.

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Until the day arrives when biodiesel fuel is made more readily available for everyone it seems that homemade biodiesel making might be a solution for those who are suffering economic problems due to disasters and unfriendly political decisions about the distribution of gas in general.

The distribution of biodiesel is still sporadic but it is less so than it was before the turn of the century. The national biodiesel board contains a comprehensive list of locations where biodiesel product is readily sold from pumps including an interactive point and click map that lets you find a biodiesel fuel station near you.

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