



Biodiesel Quick Facts

Definition: Biodiesel is the name of a cleaner burning alternative fuel, produced from domestic, renewable resources such as soybean oil or other renewable fats and vegetable oils. Biodiesel contains no petroleum, but it can be blended at any level with petroleum diesel to create a biodiesel blend. It can be used in diesel engines with few or no modifications. Biodiesel is simple to use, biodegradable, nontoxic, and essentially free of sulfur and aromatics. Biodiesel is registered with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and is legal for sale and use in the U.S. It must meet the national standard ASTM D-6751.

Success: Biodiesel has become the fastest-growing alternative fuel in the country. The industry sold 200 - 250 million gallons in 2006 – triple the gallons sold in 2005. There are about 600 major fleets nationwide including all four branches of the U.S. Military. About 1000 retail pumps nationwide also make the fuel available to the public.

Energy Balance: Biodiesel has the highest energy balance of any transportation fuel, according to the foremost biodiesel life cycle study, performed by USDA and DOE. The study found for every one unit of fossil energy needed to produce biodiesel, 3.2 units of energy are gained.

Performance: Biodiesel has the highest energy content (BTUs) of any alternative fuel. It offers significantly improved lubricity, which can reduce premature engine wear and tear. It has higher average cetane than diesel and similar fuel economy, horsepower, and torque. Biodiesel is the only alternative fuel that can immediately and seamlessly transition a diesel fleet to a cleaner-burning fuel program.

Environment: Biodiesel reduces most regulated emissions. The EPA released a comprehensive technical report of biodiesel emissions data that shows the exhaust emissions of particulate matter from pure biodiesel are about 47 percent lower than overall particulate matter emissions from diesel. The report also verified a 67 percent reduction in unburned hydrocarbons and a 48 percent reduction in carbon monoxide with pure biodiesel (B100). The DOE/USDA life cycle analysis shows biodiesel reduces lifecycle carbon dioxide by 78 percent compared to diesel. Biodiesel is ten times less toxic than table salt and biodegrades as fast as sugar.

Health: Biodiesel is the only alternative fuel to have completed the rigorous Health Effects testing required by the Clean Air Act. Results show biodiesel poses significantly less risk to human health than petroleum diesel. Breathing particulate has been shown to be a human health hazard, and biodiesel reduces particulate matter by 47 percent. Biodiesel emissions also reduce by 80 to 90 percent potential cancer causing compounds.

For more information: The National Biodiesel Board maintains the most comprehensive biodiesel Web site in the US at www.biodiesel.org. Contact Jenna Higgins, director of communications for the National Biodiesel Board at 800-841-5849 or jhiggins@biodiesel.org.