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Eco Watch

Heathrow Rail System Saves Environment

The Heathrow Express, a 15 minutes, non-stop rail service between Heathrow Airport and London Paddington, takes more than a million cars off the road annually, according to its Managing Director.

First Jet Using Bio Fuel in Successful Flight

As experts doubt that jet engines will only fly on a blend of fossil and bio fuels, **Green Flight International** and **Biodiesel Solutions** may have proved them wrong when they accomplished just that recently. [Related Story](#) (<http://www.aviationtoday.com/ran/categories/commercial/14664.html>) The company's made aviation history recently in the high desert at the Reno-Stead Airport when an L-29 military aircraft, piloted by Carol Sugars and Douglas Rodante, succeeded in completing the world's first jet flight powered solely by biodiesel fuel. The Czechoslovakian-made aircraft is rated to fly on a variety of fuels including heating oil, making it the preferred platform for testing biodiesel in jet engines.

The experimental test flights were conducted starting with a blend of jet fuel and biodiesel. The engine data was measured and the performance was evaluated and found acceptable for continued use, eventually resulting in the landmark flight using 100 percent renewable biodiesel fuel.

"As we gradually increased the amount of biodiesel in the fuel blend, the data confirmed that the aircraft continued to perform well, giving me the confidence to transition to 100 percent biodiesel," said Chief Pilot Carol Sugars, who wrote and conducted the test program. Flight tests were conducted up to an altitude of 17,000 feet showing no significant difference in performance compared to conventional jet fuel.

"This test program between Green Flight International and Biodiesel Solutions was a unique and exciting opportunity to show what can be done in renewable fuels," said Rudi Wiedemann, president of Biodiesel Solutions.

"The very idea of using 100 percent biodiesel to fly a jet aircraft makes a compelling statement about the possibilities for the future of renewable energy and a healthier planet."

Green Flight International was conceived by Douglas Rodante in April 2006 to serve as a platform for future development in the use of environmentally-friendly fuels in aviation and elsewhere. "It is imperative that the global community take immediate steps to reduce our carbon footprint, because we can no longer afford to wait while our environment continues to degrade," said Rodante. "By implementing even a small amount of bio-degradable fuel in our transportation system we can significantly reduce the CO₂ (greenhouse gasses) and NO_x (the precursor to smog) that contribute to global warming."

Europe to Include Int'l Flights Sooner

International flights will be included in Europe's emissions trading scheme by 2011 as part of an effort to impose a global emissions standards as soon as possible, according to a draft proposal approved by the European Parliament recently. The move promises to escalate tensions between Europe and the U.S. which contends that a unilateral imposition of an ETS on U.S. carriers is a violation of current aviation treaties. [Related Story](#) (<http://www.aviationtoday.com/ran/categories/commercial/14182.html>)

The measure must still undergo approval by Parliament as well as ratification by European member states but the inclusion of international flights prior to the original 2012 date stems from the fact that Parliamentarians believe that two-thirds of CO₂ emissions from aircraft come from international flights. Meanwhile, cutting emissions from the true polluters – road transport and power plants remain in the background of efforts in favor of blaming aviation which only contributes two percent of CO₂ emissions worldwide.

"We want a worldwide system as soon as possible," said Peter Liese, a German member of Parliament who helped guide the legislation through the assembly, told the *International Herald Tribune*. "There must be an end to the status quo that nothing is done in the aviation sector and which has predominated for many years now."

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The **International Air Transport Association** blasted the proposed legislation. "Even if Europe shut aircraft emissions down to zero but didn't bring the rest of the world with them, it would have minimal impact on the environment," said Anthony Concil, a spokesman for the International Air Transport Association. "We fear that legislators have succumbed to winning political favors with a local audience, but that is shortsighted as it could result in diplomatic and trade wars."

Last spring European governments pledged to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 30 percent by 2020.

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