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Greenflight flies Aero L-29 jet trainer on 100% biodiesel

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Following the first flight of an [Aero Vodochody L-29 jet trainer](#) on 100% biodiesel fuel, planning is under way for a US transcontinental flight in November as a precursor to an eventual round-the-world biofuel trip.

The first 100% biofuel flight of the [Greenflight International](#)-owned L-29 took place on 3 October from Nevada's Reno-Stead airport. The milestone came on the third day of testing, in which the fuel was changed from a 25% blend of biodiesel with Jet A to 50:50 biodiesel/kerosene and eventually to only biodiesel.

Greenflight, founded in 2006 by Douglas Rodante to demonstrate available biofuel technology for aviation, is supplied fuel by the [Sparks, Nevada based-Biodiesel Solutions](#). The biodiesel supplied for testing was made from recycled vegetable-derived cooking oil.

The next step is to make a 10-leg flight across the USA using the L-29 to highlight the capability of biodiesels and make a television documentary. "Greenflight exists to show what is possible with existing [biofuel] technology. There are lots of classes of aircraft that could use this tomorrow: a [Boeing 767](#) could use a 20% blend of Jet A and biodiesel," says the L-29's chief pilot, Carol Sugars.

All the L-29 flights were conducted at about 17,000ft (5,180m) where temperatures above Nevada can reach -4e_SDgrC (24.8°F). The biodiesel used has a gel point of -10e_SDgrC, but commercial aircraft need a fuel able to operate down to -40e_SDgrC. Greenflight is not involved in developing any biodiesel that would have the same cold-flow characteristics as Jet , but the company's work is also supported by Maxwell Shauk, chairman of [Baylor University's Institute for Air Science](#) in [Waco](#), Texas, which conducts renewable aviation fuel research.

[NASA](#) and other aeronautical research organisations had expressed an interest in what Greenflight is doing, she says, adding that a potential carbon-neutral source of biofuel is desert-based, farm-grown algae.

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