

World's First 100% Biodiesel Jet Flight



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[Transportation / Aviation](#)
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Any long time readers of TreeHugger will no doubt be aware that there are significant concerns about the [rising emissions from the aviation industry](#). We've even seen calls from some for [cigarette-style warnings](#) on advertising for flights and foreign holidays (as well as other carbon intensive products and services). However, we have also seen some early signs of the potential for greener flying, including Auckland Airport [landing Jumbos in idle](#) to save fuel, and [claims by EasyJet](#) that they can build a plane with 50% lower emissions (claims that were met with scepticism by our very own John Laumer). There has also been a considerable amount of work going into biofuels for planes, whether it's [Virgin's mysterious non-ethanol fuel](#), or [CFM International's tests](#) of 30% vegetable oil methyl ester, and 70% Jet-A1 fuel. Until now, however, there had been no reports of anyone flying a jet plane using 100% biofuel. We repeat, until now

According to [Green Flight International](#), an organization set up specifically to explore fuel options for greener flying, and [Biodiesel Solutions](#), the producers of a farm- and community-scale biodiesel conversion module. the two organizations have just completed a [test flight using 100% biodiesel](#):

Aviation history was made earlier this week 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 100% 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% renewable biodiesel fuel. According to Chief Pilot Carol Sugars who wrote and conducted the test program, "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% biodiesel." Flight tests were conducted up to an altitude of 17,000 feet showing no significant difference in performance compared to conventional jet fuel.

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It doesn't end there, however, as [Green Flight International's home page](#) boldly announces that they are planning a record breaking, around-the-world flight powered by biofuel. No further details are available at this time, but we will keep our ear to the ground to find out more.

Of course, we shouldn't forget that even if biofuels prove a viable alternative to jet fuel in the near future, they are already [the subject of significant concern](#) about sustainable sourcing of feedstocks, overall energy balance, and land use issues. This flight may be a huge step in the right direction for greener flying, but we are not out of the woods yet. [::Green Flight International::](#)[Biodiesel Solutions::](#) via press release::

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