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BIOFUELS

Algae: The Biofuel Revolution

This is great news!

The sustainable energy age has begun. It was recently announced that a company in Florida called Green Flight International (GFI) has plans to construct a \$100-million, algae biofuel plant aimed at making fuel for the aviation industry as well as for ground-based transportation.

GFI has also completed the world's first jet-aircraft flight powered by 100% biofuel. GFI president and CEO Douglas Rodante says that "algae-based biofuel would be able to replace petroleum without alterations to engines or infrastructure, and could be used for all sorts of transportation."

The potential of algae biofuel for both vehicles and air travel is so promising that it will play a large role in helping America finally become energy independent. Biofuel from algae completely eliminates the food vs. fuel concerns of other biofuels, and CO2 will be significantly reduced. Algae are the fastest growing plants in the world, and that fact translates into 20,000 gallons of biofuel per acre! Soybean, corn, switchgrass and other biofuels cannot even compete.

Since the average diesel engine is 35% more efficient than a gasoline engine, maybe the Big Three auto manufacturers in the US crying for a bailout would be wise to create a nice selection of diesel-hybrids, because only diesel engines can run on biofuels.

In Europe, there already exists the "Volkswagen One-Litre," which is a "two-seater prototype that's been on the roads in Europe, does 237 mpg." It is estimated that by 2010, these cars will be running at 250 mpg.

Try doing a search for the "VW Lupo" or "Audi A2," however - the Lupo seems to have disappeared much like the EV1 by GM did. What's up with that?

As an example of innovative green technology, there are several cool diesel motorcycles, such as: "The eCycle Hybrid Motorcycle is a...diesel-electric hybrid...accelerating from 0-60 mph in 6 sec and with fuel consumption at 160 mpg." Diesel motorcycles have been old news throughout Europe for years. I'd love to see Harley-Davidson create a diesel-hybrid with fuel efficiency in mind for Americans.

The use of biofuels in diesel engines has been clearly known for 100 years: "The use of vegetable oils for engine fuels may seem insignificant today. But such oils may become in course of time as important as petroleum and the coal tar products of the present time."

- Rudolph Diesel, 1912

I encourage Americans to learn the history of Rudolf Diesel and his diesel engine, created in 1895, which used biofuel over 110 years ago. After Diesel's death, the idea of fueling engines with biofuel was quietly swept under the rug. His original designs were modified, and Diesel engines were made to run on petroleum fuels.

This information about Diesel shows how long vehicle manufacturers and big oil companies have known that we never needed to be addicted to oil - and just look where that addiction has gotten us! We are on the verge of global chaos, with countries going bankrupt, while other countries like Saudi Arabia have been enriched through oil money to conquer once-powerful nations like Great Britain and the U.S. Many of our most dire problems on this planet, from pollution to political chaos, can be traced to oil consumption.

Americans need to demand that the government and manufacturers get serious on this issue now. With our persistence, author Tom Friedman will be right: Green will become the new red, white and blue.

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