
Carbon Monitor

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Is the use of Food Grade material as feed stock for Bio Fuels Sensible?

Recent publicity has suggested that maize and palm oil are ideal crops for creating renewable energy.

Rape seed is already a base for much of the European bio-fuels market. Careful examination of the costs shows that subsidies are key to the viability of such a fuel source.

One has to ask the question though – what is the use of taking a food source crop and turning it into fuel? After all don't we use such fuels to grow food in the first place?

This is one of the fundamental questions that must be asked in looking to creating a sustainable future. It is no different with looking at the energy input and therefore emissions in building a house made of wood rather than concrete and steel. One discovers that no amount of increased energy efficiency of the later will make up for the emissions from the creation of the raw material in the first place.

Then one has to ask, what about hybrid vehicles? The emissions created to develop and manufacture – how do these compare with a normal vehicle. In fact is replacing an existing vehicle with a newer more 'efficient' vehicle helpful. One has to consider the emissions involved in manufacture of the newer vehicle. The reality is there is no real gain over the life of the vehicle and often the old vehicle remains on the road.

So finally, with much of the world starving how can it make sense to use food crops to make bio fuels? Anecdotally it has been recorded that to make a litre of biofuels from Maize you must use enough maize to feed a child for a year. Sounds bizarre? And is it true?

Notwithstanding this being factual or otherwise we must have biofuels crops that are positive in their impact on the environment past the creation of the fuel. Ideally, they are inedible, need no artificial fertilizer, pesticides or herbicides and grow on land that is not suitable for crops and is subject to flood or erosion. Therein lies the signature of sustainability – everyone and the environment wins. Otherwise its window dressing.

Flex Fuel Car Technology for South Africa

A mixed public-private Brazilian task force will meet South African counterparts to discuss possible transfer of Brazilian ethanol and flex-fuel automotive technology, the Brazilian National Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association, or Anfavea, said.

The Brazilian group will make its initial presentation at a seminar in Johannesburg. The group includes representatives of Brazil's Mines and Energy Ministry, Foreign Affairs Ministry, state-run oil giant Petrobras and motor vehicle executives named by Anfavea.

"The mission is in South Africa not only to offer a product, but also to show our know-how in the ethanol industry and its viability," said Anfavea President Rogelio Golfarb in a statement.

Currently, Anfavea is in the midst of negotiations with South Africa on a deal to reduce mutual barriers in automotive trade.

Brazilian automakers have a special interest in exporting the new technology of flex-fuel vehicles, which can run on any combination of gasoline and ethanol, to South Africa, a market with a total fleet of 6.2 million vehicles and annual sales of 550 000 units.

In Brazil, flex-fuel vehicles have taken a huge market share. After a little more than three years on the market, total production and sales of this kind of vehicle has reached more than two million units, with 77% of market share for new cars.

Currently, nearly all local automakers, including global giants Fiat SpA, General Motors Corp, Ford Motor Co and Volkswagen AG, produce flex-fuel models in Brazil.

Coal Mine Methane Project

In the Donbass area of the Ukraine very large amounts of CMM occur. At the time most of the CMM is released to the atmosphere using degassing wells, which are often placed in the steppe far away from residential and industrial areas, so that is often impossible to use the CMM for heat generation economically. Because the electricity price is very low in Ukraine and there are no existing laws for supporting environmentally friendly energies like CMM, CMM can not be used in cogeneration units for power generation at economical conditions.

Consequently most of the CMM in the Donbass area is released unused into the atmosphere.

In this project CMM from the suction system of the coal mine Donbasskaya 3, which is concurrently in construction, should be used in a boiler for heat generation. Additionally a flare for further methane destruction should be installed.

Actually there are three existing redundant steam boilers in operation with an output of 25 t/h steam each. The boilers are fired with coal and supply the coal mine facilities with heat (steam).

In this project one of the existing boilers should be fuel-switched. The boiler should be upgraded with a CMM burner system and henceforth be fired with CMM instead of coal.

Due to the large amount of CMM occurring on the coal mine, additionally a flare with a firing capacity of 5.0 MW should be installed. If the experience with the flare will be good and the amount of CMM remains high, further flares may follow.

Methane with a GWP of 21 (global warming potential) is 21 times more toxic than CO₂ for global warming. Burning the methane results in only one tonne of CO₂ being emitted therefore reducing GHG gases into the atmosphere significantly.

This project is a JI or joint initiative where a country with a Kyoto emissions cap sponsors a project in another similar country and shares in the emissions reductions.

One of the issues of a JI becoming more significant, particularly in the Eastern Block and the old USSR is the country where the project is hosted must have a full emissions inventory.

EU Prices Remain Steady

Recent trading has seen a slight softening of the price after a sustained increase in prices over the last month.

Volumes are said to be down by 15% with a total of 49.8million EU units traded.



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Australia Proposes its Own Version of Kyoto

Prime Minister John Howard's conservative government on refused to support a plan by state

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leaders to introduce caps on carbon dioxide emissions, saying it would devastate the economy.

Australia is one of few industrialized countries that has refused to sign the Kyoto protocol on global warming, which sets targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Howard's government has repeatedly said the 1997 agreement would unfairly hamper Australia's economy, which is heavily dependent on exporting coal and other carbon-rich energy sources.

But the leaders of Australia's six states and two territories - all members of the Labor party that is in opposition nationally - have sought to bypass the government's refusal to sign Kyoto by introducing their own plan to reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

The so-called "cap and trade" plan gives companies a maximum emissions target for three polluting gases - carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide - and would result in large fines to those that exceed their caps.

The plan, detailed in a paper released recently, would also allow low-polluting companies to trade their remaining carbon emissions credits for money or credit.

Without the federal government's support, the plan will be difficult to enforce.

South Australia state Premier Mike Rann said the regional leaders were forced to act because the federal government was not properly addressing the issue of global warming.

"Ultimately this is a failure of national leadership," Rann told Australian Broadcasting Corp. radio. "Ultimately someone's got to do it. The stakes are too high."

Australia's federal Resources Minister Ian Macfarlane dismissed the scheme, saying it would further increase Australia's burgeoning energy costs.

"That sort of impact on the economy would be devastating," Macfarlane told the ABC.

He said the government was investing in other methods of greenhouse gas reduction, including an



experimental technology that would allow carbon dioxide emissions to be captured and pumped underground for storage.

Associated Press.

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