

RENEWABLE ENERGY IN IOWA: MYTH VS. FACT

Myth: Ethanol and E-85 are more toxic and dangerous than gasoline.

Fact: Pure ethanol can be and is consumed by human beings (think of vodka). The ethanol portion of fuel is safer than gasoline, which contains both toxins and carcinogens. When used in fuel, ethanol is “denatured” with gasoline or a bitter agent to prevent people from drinking it. E85, because it contains far more ethanol and far less gasoline, has less toxins and carcinogens than the 10% ethanol fuel blend.

Source: Iowa Corn Promotion Board

Myth: The price of corn impacts the price of ethanol.

Fact: Ethanol is priced as a competing fuel to gasoline. It is an energy commodity and is not tied to grain markets. The cost of corn has little or no impact on the market price of ethanol.

Source: Iowa Corn Growers Association

Myth: Ethanol is the number one market for Iowa corn and ethanol co-products.

Fact: Livestock is still the number one market for Iowa corn and ethanol co-products. Livestock and poultry consume two-thirds of Iowa’s annual corn crop. Iowa needs both livestock and the ethanol industry to succeed. Ideally, livestock should be located close by ethanol plants to save growers on corn transportation costs, and at the same time, reap the benefits of a supply of manure to fertilize next year’s crop. Having ethanol production nearby gives growers an additional market and provides distillers grain for livestock feeding.

Source: Iowa Corn Growers Association & Iowa Farm Bureau Federation

Myth: We will deplete human and animal food supplies by using corns and other grains for fuel production.

Fact: Actually, the production of ethanol from grain uses only the corn starch portion of the corn kernel, which is abundant and low in value. The remaining vitamins, minerals, protein and fiber are sold as high-value livestock feed.

Source: Iowa Renewable Fuels Association

Myth: It takes more energy to produce ethanol compared to the energy we get from ethanol.

Fact: USDA research indicates about a 35% gain in the process of growing the corn and turning it into ethanol. This is a result of 20 years of improvement in corn yields and processing technologies, both of which continue to improve, making ethanol production less and less energy intensive. In Iowa, most ethanol plants have been built within the last five years and use highly efficient technology.

Source: Iowa Corn Promotion Board

Myth: There isn’t enough ethanol to meet the new demand.

Fact: Current production, production from new biorefineries, imports and migration of ethanol from conventional gasoline markets will provide sufficient ethanol supply to meet the demand. Iowa’s farmers have always responded to market forces and met consumer demand throughout the years. Seed technology developments, increasing agricultural efficiency, innovation in renewable fuels production processes and other breakthroughs will ensure that the Iowa farmer

will continue to meet the needs for the world's food, feed and fuel. U.S. ethanol producers have the capacity to produce nearly 5.7 billion gallons of ethanol annually, or 475 million gallons a month. In addition, new ethanol biorefineries and expansions will add additional annual production capacity.

Source: National Renewable Fuels Association and Iowa Corn Promotion Board

Myth: I will get less miles per gallon with E85.

Fact: Yes, you may get less miles per gallon but the cost savings from using E85 should more than offset the loss in mileage. Recent testing by the Environmental Protection Agency of several 2008 automobile models showed a fuel efficiency reduction from E85 use of about 25 percent. However, the cost of fuel was estimated to be around 10 percent better annually for E85 use. The difference between E85 fuel efficiency and regular fuel efficiency varies based on temperature and driving conditions and is comparable to other fuel efficiency factors. For example, aggressive driving can reduce mileage by 20%, and low tire pressure can cut mileage by 6%. The driving range for any particular vehicle will depend on the size of the fuel tank and the driver's habits.

*Source: Iowa Corn Promotion Board; Environmental Protection Agency
[www.fueleconomy.gov]*

Myth: I can retrofit my car to use E85.

Fact: Experts do not recommend converting a gasoline-only vehicle to operate on E85. This conversion involves a lot of complex changes for which these vehicles aren't designed. In contrast, FFVs come from the manufacturer with the same warranties as gasoline vehicles and are designed specifically to use E85 efficiently and burn cleaner.

Source: Iowa Corn Promotion Board

Myth: Ethanol cannot be shipped via pipeline and therefore can't reach the markets that need it.

Fact: Ethanol can be shipped via pipeline, but the U.S. pipeline infrastructure is not set up for shipment from production centers to markets. Thus, the ethanol industry has developed a "virtual pipeline" consisting of rail, truck and barge options to deliver ethanol to market more effectively than shipping by pipeline.

Source: National Renewable Fuels Association

Myth: Increased corn prices lead to large increases in food prices for consumers.

Fact: Because most corn is used as feed for livestock, such as cattle and pigs, consumer prices for meat products will eventually rise as livestock supplies adjust to higher feed costs. However, prices on the consumer side will be small. Currently, less than 10 cents out of each consumer dollar is spent on food, and less than 2 cents goes to the farm sector. Americans spend less on food than any other country in the nation.

Source: Iowa Farm Bureau Federation

Myth: Ethanol actually adds to air pollution.

Fact: Ethanol is inherently cleaner than gasoline, it emits less hydrocarbons, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide and hydrogen. Ethanol reduces carbon monoxide emissions by as much as 25

percent and helps reduce greenhouse gases. Ethanol reduces overall toxic pollution by diluting harmful compounds found in gasoline such as benzene and other aromatics.

Source: National Corn Growers Association

Myth: Ethanol production will use all of Iowa's water.

Fact: Currently ethanol production is a small part of ground water demand. Ethanol production will not “dry up” the state, according to Robert Libra, geologist from the Iowa Geological Survey. Special care and attention is given to locate ethanol plants where water is in good supply.