

# Cruisers Cast Eye On Ethanol

ST. LOUIS, Ill. — Darrell Mortland expects a lot of drive-bys. In fact, he's hoping for them.

Calhoun County, Illinois, sits slightly more than a stone's throw northeast of the St. Louis metropolitan area and its 2.5 million residents. City dwellers escaping for an afternoon often meander along Calhoun County's winding roads soaking up the sights, sounds and smells of country life.

This summer, some day-trippers will take home a new appreciation for ethanol. Mortland, who is area manager for Jersey County Farm Supply — a Growmark member affiliate in the Calhoun County town of Hardin — is encouraging farmers to proudly display their support for the home-grown fuel.

"Calhoun County is a small agricultural community," said Mortland. "But the more the public sees farmers are committed to using ethanol, the greater their support. With our visibility to a major metropolitan area, we have the opportunity to give a human face to ethanol for a public that knows very little about it."

Each time Jersey County Farm Supply delivers a bulk load of 10 percent ethanol-blended fuel to a farm custom-

er, the driver also drops off an aluminum sign for the farmer to display. The 18-inch by 24-inch sign reads, "This farm uses 10 percent ethanol. I grow it; I use it." The signs are compliments of the Illinois Corn Growers Association.

Posting a sign is only a small step in building broad-based support for ethanol, acknowledges Mortland. But he points out public support for cleaner fuels is growing. And corn growers are among those to benefit.

Illinois recently granted a tax advantage to ethanol, which makes a 90-octane 10 percent ethanol-blended fuel equivalent in price to 87-octane gasoline for Mortland's customers.

"Now when my patrons choose ethanol, they help themselves as corn growers, they help the environment and they're purchasing a premium product for a reasonable price," he said.

Calhoun County corn grower Roy Jacobs, Sr., relies on ethanol as his fuel of choice. "When I use ethanol, I'm helping corn prices," he said. "And I get the same performance as I would with gasoline."

Before the rush of summer city visitors starts filling the roads, Jacobs intends to post

one of the signs promoting ethanol. "We have to advertise our product to the public," he said. "To be supportive, they need to know farmers grow corn. And corn is made into ethanol."

By summertime, Jacobs will



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also have an attractive pen set promoting ethanol resting on his desk. Mortland is supplying the complimentary sets to customers as they reach the 1,000

gallon-mark in bulk ethanol blend purchases. The sets depict a hand peeling back the husk on an ear of corn, with the words "Ethanol: The Pollution Solution" laser-engraved.

He emphasizes that many Growmark-affiliated FS companies throughout Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin are running special promotion programs for ethanol. "Our program isn't the most extensive, but we have the advantage of being on the fringe of an urban area, which makes it even more pressing that we promote ethanol," said Mortland.

In the past five years, Growmark-affiliated companies have sold more than 250 million gallons of 10-percent ethanol-blended fuel and sales are growing about 10 percent each year. That steady growth suits Mortland just fine. He intends to keep the Calhoun County ethanol promotion program running indefinitely. In fact, this summer he hopes to have FS employees available to help farmers get their ethanol signs posted where the road cruisers will see them. Ethanol's one good bargain everyone should know about, believes Mortland.

## Corn Growers Keep Pressure On Over Ethanol

CHICAGO, Ill. — Corn growers are committed to securing a year-round role for ethanol in the reformulated gasoline (RFG) program as final rules are drafted, according to the farmer leadership of the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA).

Ethanol's role in RFG was among the top priorities discussed by the NCGA executive committee, which is made up of 15 corn growers from 10 states.

"Last summer the tremendous effort of corn farmers throughout the country convinced the Bush Administration that reformulated gasoline blended with ethanol will be effective in reducing urban smog. Now we have a new president and a new administrator of EPA who will write

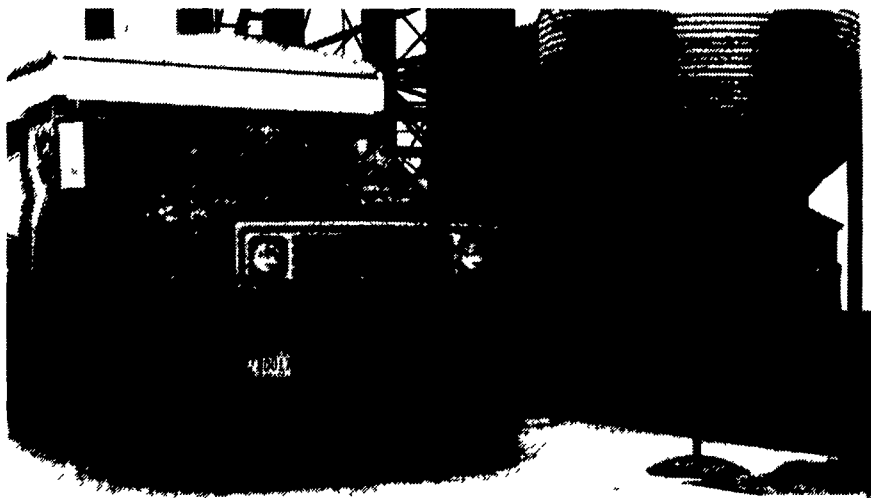
the final regulations to implement the Clean Air Act. NCGA will have to work even harder than we did a year ago to ensure that the new administration understands the benefits of using ethanol and the importance of this market to corn farmers," said NCGA President Randy Cruise, a farmer from Pleasanton, Neb.

"We have the advantage of solid scientific evidence to back out position and the commitment of the NCGA membership to doggedly pursue this issue," Cruise said.

NCGA membership is expected to be "geared up" to do whatever it takes to protect this expanding market for agriculture. With the final rule on reformulated gasoline expected to be issued in mid-August, it could be another "long hot summer" for ethanol.

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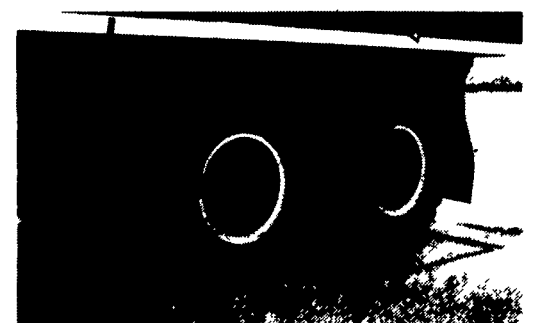
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