

# ASA Praises Proposed Renewable Fuels Legislation

ST. LOUIS, Mo. — The American Soybean Association (ASA) praised Senators Chuck Hagel (R-NE) and Tim Johnson (D-SD) for their introduction last week of the "Renewable Fuels for Energy Security Act of 2001" bill.

The legislation sets a federal goal for increased national use of renewable fuels, such as biodiesel and ethanol. Under the measure, renewable fuels would account for three percent of highway transportation fuels by 2011 and five percent by 2016. The measure will allow flexible approaches to comply with program goals, in ways that best fit within the operations of fuel providers.

"This legislation is needed to help renewable fuels become part of the solution as America seeks ways to reduce years of U.S. dependence on petroleum products. This bill is an important step to foster domestic energy production," said ASA First Vice President Bart Ruth, a producer from Rising City, Neb. "U.S. consumers will benefit from the shift toward cleaner-burning and better performing fuels while U.S. farmers can use a much-needed boost to soybean prices."

Senator Hagel said, "By establishing a renewable fuel standard,

we can improve our air quality, strengthen our national security, reduce our trade deficit, decrease dependency on foreign oil, and create an expanded market for America's farmers."

Senator Johnson said, "I believe renewable fuels such as ethanol and biodiesel should be the centerpiece of our future energy strategy, because these fuels are home grown solutions that benefit our farmers, provide cleaner air, and reduce our dependence on foreign oil. This legislation establishes an aggressive, but realistic, growth pattern for ethanol and biodiesel production and use in the U.S."

Commonly produced from soybean and other vegetable oils, biodiesel contains no petroleum. It can be blended easily with diesel. Biodiesel is popular in Europe where motorists use 250 million gallons annually. According to the National Biodiesel Board (NBB), U.S. biodiesel producers are expected to manufacture 20 million gallons in fiscal year 2001, a four-fold increase from last year.

"Biodiesel's growing popularity reflects the increasing interest in it as a cleaner-burning fuel for school buses, national parks, gov-

ernment fleets and for other fuel users across the nation that are addressing air quality issues," said NBB Executive Director Joe Jobe. "A national commitment toward the utilization of renewable fuels will provide a meaningful boost to the biodiesel industry and our national energy policy."

The fuel offers many environmental and operational benefits. It has the highest energy content of any alternative fuel, which is especially important in heavy-duty diesel applications. Biodiesel is the only alternative fuel to

have passed the rigorous Health Effects testing requirements of the Clean Air Act; is non-toxic, biodegradable and free of sulfur. Independent studies also show that the use of biodiesel in conventional diesel engines results in a substantial reduction of pollutants, including carbon dioxide. Moreover, it increases the lubricity of diesel, which is especially valuable when the sulfur content of diesel is reduced. Additional information on the attributes of biodiesel is available at [www.bio-diesel.org](http://www.bio-diesel.org).

Every 100 million gallons of biodiesel requires 760 million pounds of a feedstock, such as vegetable oils, recycled grease or animal fats. If soybean oil were the only feedstock used, 100 million gallons of biodiesel would reduce by one-third the current surplus of 2.1 billion pounds of soy oil. Reducing soy oil supplies by this amount would increase the U.S. soy oil price by an estimated 1.5 cents per pound. With 11 pounds of soy oil in a bushel of soybeans, this would raise U.S. soybean prices by as much as 16.5 cents per bushel.

## Food Safety Scientists Cite No Basis For Starlink Scare

NEW YORK, N.Y. — "Eat, drink and be wary of those who try to scare you about the safety of your food." That was the message issued recently by food safety scientists at the American Council on Science and Health who noted that the scare about bioengineered foods was distorted and exaggerated — and completely without scientific merit.

The Center for Disease Control's (CDC) found this week that there was no evidence that biotech Starlink corn caused allergic reactions in those who consumed it.

When tests first showed traces of the corn in Taco Bell tacos, anti-biotechnology activists jumped on the fact that the corn was approved for animal, but not human use. But, as the new CDC finding supports, they went too far in insisting that people who ate the corn would become sick from it.

While there was a theory behind why the corn might provoke allergic reactions in some people, the question was whether that hypothesis alone should have been enough to instigate the drastic reaction it prompted. The science shows that it did not.

Yet after the news broke, many people who felt the least bit ill after eating a taco or other corn product assumed it was an allergic reaction to Cry9C, the protein found in Starlink corn. "Indeed, the activists did such a good job telling us that we'd get sick from the corn, that people actually felt ill," said ACSH president Dr. Elizabeth Whelan.

"People are indeed susceptible to the suggestions from activists that foods will make them sick — even if there is actually nothing in the food to make them sick. If the people did get sick, it was from the activists, not the food," said Dr. Whelan.

She noted ACSH's Priorities for Health article, "Rumble in the Bronx: Mass Hysteria and the 'Chemicalization' of Demonology" which discusses the not so rare phenomenon of mass hysteria, which also took place in Belgium with the Coca-Cola dioxin scare.

According to ACSH Director of Nutrition Dr. Ruth Kava, the activists claim that biotech foods are not tested is simply without basis in fact. "The FDA does indeed thoroughly investigate new bioengineered foods — that's how they knew there might be a possi-

bility of an allergic reaction to the Cry9C protein," she said.

Dr. Kava points out that food allergies are fairly common, but are attributable to food constituents themselves, such as peanut protein, and not to processes, like those used to genetically modify food.

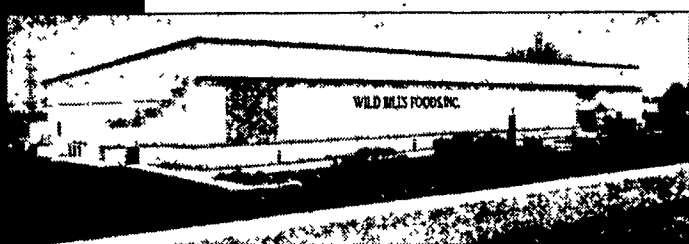
Dr. Kava advises us to learn from history. "The groups that told us we would get sick from Starlink also said, based on one laboratory experiment, that the Monarch butterfly should be nearing extinction because of Bt proteins in corn. But its just not happening."

"This should be a lesson to us," said Dr. Whelan. "Before we create international hysteria about the safety of our food supply, we should be presented with at least a modicum of science to justify the concern."

The American Council on Science and Health is a public health, consumer-education consortium of over 350 scientists and physicians, experts who serve on ACSH's scientific advisory panel. ACSH publishes reports on issues pertaining to the environment, nutrition, pharmaceuticals, and tobacco and helps the public deal with real health risks productively.



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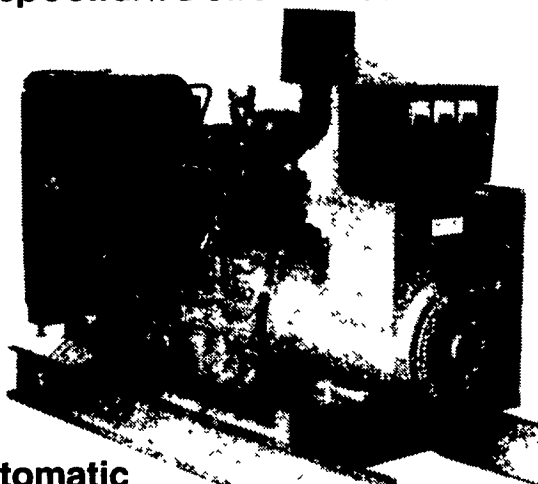
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