

# Got Ethanol?

## Greater Philadelphia Clean Cities Program Receives More Than \$130,000 To Build State's First Ethanol Fuel Station

PHILADELPHIA —For the first time anywhere in Pennsylvania, drivers will be able to fill flexible fuel vehicles with ethanol, a clean-burning alternative to gasoline.

Ethanol is an alcohol derived primarily from corn. Most newer model pick-ups, vans, cars and some SUVs are certified to run on fuel blends, including a mix of gasoline and ethanol.

A quick way to tell if you can fill up on an ethanol blend is to check the inside of the gas cap for the flexible fuel ve-

hicle designation. Timing and plans for the new station, made possible by grants from the United States Department of Energy (U.S. DOE) and Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection, were revealed recently.

"For the sake of energy security, our country needs to address its addiction to petroleum, much of which must be imported from volatile regions of the world," said GPCCP Coordinator Eric Cheung. "The feedstock for ethanol includes agricultural products

such as corn and switchgrass. These crops, grown by farmers, make ethanol an American fuel, and consumers who buy the fuel will help keep energy dollars at home."

Ethanol is sold commercially as a blend of 85 percent ethanol and 15 percent gasoline, known as E85. In addition to energy security benefits, E85 also reduces smog-forming compounds and toxic air pollutants.

The E85 retail pump will be located at the Sunoco station on 12th and Vine streets and is anticipated to be open to the

public by May 2004. E85 prices will be comparable to the price of premium gasoline. As local construction of ethanol plants occurs, prices will drop even more as consumers in Minnesota and Illinois can testify.

Clean Cities anticipates that initial users of E85 in our region will be local government fleet operators, but outreach efforts will include the general public. "Imagine the conversation at the pump as a Dodge Caravan filled with members of the community soccer team pulls in to refuel

with E85 - the educational opportunities will be as big as the benefits to the economy," said Cheung. Flexible fuel ethanol vehicles are the most numerous of the alternative fuel vehicles produced. To verify whether your vehicle can operate on E85, log on to the National Ethanol Vehicle Coalition's Website, [www.e85fuel.com](http://www.e85fuel.com).

A consulting firm, Sustainable Energy Strategies, Inc., has partnered with Clean Cities to install the E85 pump. Check this Website: [www.cleanair.org/cleancities](http://www.cleanair.org/cleancities).



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## Ohio Popcorn Production Grows

COLUMBUS, Ohio — In the world of Ohio's specialty crops, popcorn is probably the most overlooked.

But despite its quiet presence, the crop has a firm foothold in Ohio agriculture. The state is ranked fourth in the nation in popcorn production (behind Nebraska, Indiana, and Iowa) with industry estimates ranging from 60,000 to 65,000 acres and interest in the crop continues to grow.

"Popcorn is a quiet crop that you don't hear a lot about," said Peter Thomison, an Ohio State University Extension agronomist. "But more growers are growing it, mainly because of the demand from end users and an Ohio market to sell the product."

Popcorn, unlike field dent corn, is a type of flint corn, grown to maturity in the field. By comparison, sweet corn is harvested half-way through the grain fill period.

"Popcorn is considered a specialty crop, but is grown much like field corn," said Thomison. "However, unlike field corn, it's harvested as pounds per acre rather than bushels per acre."

Popcorn is grown mainly throughout northwest Ohio. According to the Van Wert County office of Ohio State University Extension, the county leads the state with most acres of popcorn harvested and accounts for more than 3 percent of popcorn production in the United States.

Thomison said popcorn is one of the "healthiest" specialty crops grown in Ohio with local buyer outlets and markets available for contracted growers to deal with. But the crop does have its agronomic problems.

"One problem with popcorn is that it can lodge badly, more so than regular field corn," said Thomison. "This could be that there hasn't been a lot of hybrid development for growers and the hybrids that are available don't have stalk quality comparable to dent corn hybrids."

Lodging is a weather-related condition in which stalks fall over, making harvest difficult and resulting in loss of yields.

Growers interested in popcorn production can obtain information from several national Websites, including: [www.agcom.purdue.edu/AgCom/Pubs/NCH/NCH-5.html](http://www.agcom.purdue.edu/AgCom/Pubs/NCH/NCH-5.html); <http://oregonstate.edu/Dept/NWREC/popcorn.html>; [www.ianr.unl.edu/pubs/fieldcrops/g426.htm](http://www.ianr.unl.edu/pubs/fieldcrops/g426.htm); [www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/afcm/popcorn.html](http://www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/afcm/popcorn.html); and [www.agmrc.org/corn/pc.html](http://www.agmrc.org/corn/pc.html).