

Clean Fuels Alliance America Celebrates a Biodiesel Innovator in Honor of National Biodiesel Day

JEFFERSON CITY, MO – National Biodiesel Day takes place March 18, in honor of Rudolf Diesel's birthday. In the 1890s, Rudolf invented the diesel engine, which was designed to run on peanut oil. Rudolf knew early on the prominent role plant oils could play in fueling the future's vehicles.

This year it was especially meaningful as our industry celebrates 30 years of clean fuels innovation and recognizes how far we have come since the early days of biodiesel. Today, we are witnessing an explosion in demand for low-carbon fuels like biodiesel, renewable diesel and sustainable aviation fuel. It is because of that growth and diversification that the National Biodiesel Board recently announced a new name and new brand — Clean Fuels Alliance America.

With that transition, the industry reflects on how it all began. Alan Weber, an economist and farmer from Missouri, has been involved with biodiesel from the beginning, helping a once nascent industry soar to heights never imagined 30 years ago. Weber's story is unique and his passion for the industry is contagious.

As a student at the University of Missouri in the early 1990s, Weber began working alongside a professor who had some ideas about taking vegetable oils and turning them into fuel. Weber was excited about the prospect and started analyzing this new opportunity. He traveled to Europe to learn more about their process, spent time in underground coal mines in Kentucky and with urban bus fleets looking at tailpipe emission reductions with biodiesel.

Fast forward to today and Weber said, "Carbon is very much on the forefront of people's minds. We can actually, through our farming practices, have an impact on the carbon intensity score of the fuels that we use such as biodiesel and renewable diesel, and that is something we can do right now."

The clean fuels industry has seen and will continue to see significant growth as the world further prioritizes clean energy. Clean Fuels will be an integral part of the solution for sustainable energy that's not only affordable but also scalable and available now, with biodiesel continuing to lead the way.

"I continue to be involved in this industry for probably one simple reason," he said. "This is the nexus of agriculture and the environment. I can't think of anyplace I'd rather be. How do I have a bigger impact on our economy, the environment and the planet all at one time? Simple as that."

Today, the industry supports about 64,000 jobs nationwide. Biodiesel reduces greenhouse gas emissions by 57 percent to 86 percent, according to the EPA. In 2020 the US market reached 3 billion gallons and has exceeded the minimum requirements under the federal renewable fuel standard.

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Made from an increasingly diverse mix of resources such as recycled cooking oil, soybean oil, and animal fats, the clean fuels industry is a proven, integral part of America's clean energy future. Clean Fuels Alliance America is the U.S. trade association representing the entire

biodiesel, renewable diesel and sustainable aviation fuel supply chain, including producers, feedstock suppliers and fuel distributors. Clean Fuels receives funding from a broad mix of private companies and associations, including the United Soybean Board and state checkoff organizations.