

Bio-diesel Fuels

Using alternative fuels, such as bio-diesel, are becoming a very viable option for farmers interested in reducing their reliance of petroleum. Below are a few considerations to make when transitioning to a new fuel.

-Use fuels that meet American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) international standards to ensure fuel quality and engine performance. The standard for bio-diesel is ASTM D67.

-Bio-diesel blends can be burned in existing engines with little or no modifications. However, bio-diesel is a solvent, and over time, will degrade seals, gaskets and fuel lines made of natural rubber. Vehicles older than 1994 may need to replace these parts with synthetic materials such as Vitron®.

-Bio-diesel does not void engine warranties. Engine manufacturers warrant for parts and assembly of their engines, and do not warrant their engines for specific fuels. The fuel supplier is responsible for fuel-caused engine problems, so it is important to work with reputable suppliers whose products meet ASTM specifications. For more information on engine warranties, visit: <http://www.biodiesel.org/resources/fuelfactsheets/standardsandwarranties.shtm>

-Bio-diesel is a strong solvent and will clean out fuel tank sediments during initial use. These sediments can plug the fuel filter, so it is important to inspect your filters and replace them as needed. Cleaning fuel tanks prior to using bio-diesel will help minimize this problem.

-Bio-diesel can gel at cold temperatures. Fuel blends and additives can control this, so it is important to make sure that your fuel supplier is aware of your operating conditions.

For more information on using bio-diesel visit: Bio-diesel Handling and Use Guidelines-U.S. Department of Energy

<http://www.nvel.gov/vehicleandfuels/npht/pdfs/39451.pdf>