

# "On the Road Again"

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## **On the Road Again...**

“On the road again, I just can’t wait to get on the road again. The life I love is makin’ music with my friends. And I can’t wait to get on the road again”. The distinctive voice of Willie Nelson has made this song a country music classic. The instantly recognizable lyrics have inspired people to go places they’ve never been and see things they may never see again for over 25 years. These days, however, Willie Nelson is “On the Road Again” in a whole new kind of way. Willie travels over 135,000 miles a year going to and from concerts. Instead of filling his customized tour bus with traditional diesel fuel, he uses an alternative fuel source known as biodiesel. The biodiesel boom is making waves in the petroleum and agricultural industries and the U.S Government has taken notice. America’s increasing dependence on foreign oil underscore the importance of exploring alternatives. Through the use of biodiesel, we can reduce foreign oil imports, adopt an energy source that’s clean and renewable and help family farmers find new uses for their products. America can stop depending on foreign oil.

In his State of the Union Address, President George Bush boldly proclaimed that “America is addicted to oil. The best way to break this addiction is through the development of cleaner, cheaper, and more reliable alternative energy sources.” For too long, says President Bush, our nation has been dependent on foreign oil. As part of the President’s Advanced Energy Initiative and the 2007 Farm Bill calls for an increase of the supply of alternative fuels by setting a mandatory fuel standard of 35 billion gallons of renewable fuels by 2017. This comes on the heels of the 2005 Energy Policy Act which called for 7 billion gallons of renewable fuels by 2012. The government’s

response to the exponential growth of this market proves that biodiesel is a force to be reckoned with.

The idea of powering trucks and cars with vegetable oils and animal fats may not be a new concept. It was at the World Exhibition in Paris in 1900, that Dr. Rudolph Diesel showed his diesel engine; an engine that was capable of running on a variety of fuels including vegetable and peanut oils. Although biodiesel production is nothing new, in the United States it is both a novelty and a cause for growing excitement. What is new is the buzz surrounding these so called "green and yellow" fuels. Everyone from Willie Nelson to the President of the United States is touting alternative fuel as a tremendous opportunity both environmentally and economically for our country. So, with celebrity endorsements, television ad campaigns and a push from the President, it's easy to see why the market for biodiesel has been firmly established and demand is at an all time high.

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, biodiesel is America's fastest growing alternative fuel. U.S. sales of biodiesel tripled last year to 250 million gallons, up from 75 million gallons in 2006. Despite the growth, biodiesel still accounts for less than 1 percent of the total diesel fuel sold nationwide. Biodiesel is currently produced in 87 plants across the U.S. There is a heavy concentration of distributors in the Midwest, making biodiesel one of the last hopes for independent farmers, a dying breed in the American heartland. Some signs of how dramatic the growth could be in 2008 are shown by recent announcements of new biodiesel plants across the nation. Is biodiesel the only solution? No. Can it be an even bigger piece of our future? You bet.

B100, the pure form of biodiesel contains no petroleum, but can be blended at any level with petroleum fuel to create a blend. Biodiesel is a clean-burning fuel that costs about the same as regular diesel but provides important benefits for your diesel engine, for our environment, and our country. Biodiesel is available at an increasing number of gas stations and convenience stores, including Oklahoma City-based Love's Travel Stops and Country Stores. This is good news for truckers who like using biodiesel because it's cheaper than petroleum fuel, gives them better mileage and cleans out their engines. Farmers are excited because it offers them the prospect of a brand new market for their products. Many consumers feel good about using biodiesel because it keeps their fuel buying dollars at home instead of sending them to foreign countries. A small gas station owner put it perfectly when he said "I feel good about selling fuel made mostly from products grown in the Midwest, rather than pumped out of the Mideast". This all bodes well for the future of biodiesel according to petroleum industry insiders who predict continued expansion of the biodiesel market.

As the nation endeavors to reduce its crippling dependence on foreign oil, Oklahoma works to become a leader in the biodiesel market. With three plants operational and several in the development phase, Oklahoma's biodiesel capacity is poised to reach 20 million gallons. Biodiesel is making a significant impact in Durant, Oklahoma with the opening of BioWillie, a biodiesel refinery that employs 150 in southeastern Oklahoma. After personally touring the \$10 million facility, I have a new appreciation for the impact of biodiesel on our state and country. The plant exceeded expectations by increasing their BioWillie branded fuel by four times, up to 10 million gallons, within a single year. Earth Biofuels CEO, Dennis McLaughlin believes "As

biofuels proliferate, we are going to see family farms emerge again because the demand for their crops is going to be so enormous.” We need to develop this homegrown source of fuels to buffer ourselves from fragile and volatile nations. The business and agricultural climate in Oklahoma is perfect for the development of biodiesel plants, pushing Oklahoma to the forefront of this industry on the rise!

I believe it is our responsibility to protect our precious natural resources by informing ourselves and others about energy alternatives. That’s why I as an FFA member am embracing the 25x25 vision: that America will produce 25 percent of its energy from renewable resources by 2025. The implementation of 25x25 will help secure America’s energy future.

Whether biodiesel can fulfill the promise of a brighter energy future is not yet clear. What is clear is that the market for biodiesel is rolling ahead with no signs of stopping. Are Americans ready to fill their vehicles with biodiesel at green and yellow pumps? For the general population this remains to be seen. However, the French-fried-smelling exhaust coming from Willie Nelson’s tour bus proves that for him at least the answer is a resounding “You betcha!”

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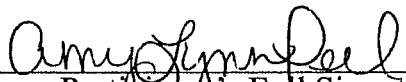
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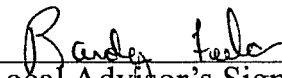
My speech entitled "On The Road Again"

in the Agricultural Policy division is the result of my own effort and ability.

It is understood that I am encouraged to utilize all available training facilities of my local school in developing my speaking abilities and that I may obtain facts and working data from any source. However, when information from other sources is used, such as direct quotes or phrases, specific dates, figures, or other materials, it must be marked in "quotes" in the manuscript and identified in the bibliography at the end of the manuscript. Failure to do so represents plagiarism and will automatically lead to my disqualification.

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