

Plant the Seed of Truth

Too often, special corporate interests work on behalf of profit instead of America's broader interests.

In the case of American ethanol, global oil and food companies, in conjunction with misguided fringe groups, have waged a deep-pocketed campaign of misinformation. At the heart of that propaganda campaign (see [news story from Roll Call](#) at GrowthEnergy.org/reports) are five myths about ethanol. Below you will find the truth, to help you sort out fact from fiction.

MYTH: Ethanol drives up food prices.

FACT: "Food versus fuel" debate is a myth – American corn growers have demonstrated they have more than enough capacity to satisfy all demand for livestock feed, exports, and fuel ethanol. What most Americans don't know is that approximately 1 percent of all corn grown in this country is directly consumed by humans. The rest is No. 2 yellow field corn, which is indigestible to humans and goes to feeding livestock, exports to feed foreign livestock herds, food supplements such as high-fructose corn syrup, and ethanol. In fact, a co-product of ethanol production is the high-protein distiller's grain that is used as a livestock feed; approximately a third of every bushel of grain that goes into ethanol is returned in highly-sought animal feed. Countless academic, economic and government studies, including the most recent World Bank study, have disproven the so-called "food vs. fuel" myth, concluding that Wall Street speculators, high oil prices and the high costs of manufacturing, packaging and transporting all have far more impact than ethanol on the grocery prices that everyday Americans pay.

Myth: Ethanol production is inefficient.

FACT: The most recent study by USDA demonstrates that ethanol is a net energy gain, producing 2.3 Btus for every single Btu put into production. That is better than twice the rate of return on gasoline, which is a 1-to-1 Btu ratio. Every day, ethanol production becomes more energy efficient, less water-intensive and environmentally friendlier, while

oil becomes dirtier, costlier and riskier to extract. The majority of ethanol plants across the country are natural gas powered. Next-generation plants, which would use renewable energy sources such as wind or landfill methane, promise to be energy negative, meaning they actually produce more energy than they use.

Myth: Ethanol is bad for the environment.

FACT: Today, ethanol is the only widely-available greener alternative to oil in the market. Yale University's Journal of Industrial Ecology published a peer-reviewed study that found grain ethanol is at least 59 percent cleaner than conventional gasoline. The EPA further affirmed ethanol's role in cleaning our air with its final Renewable Fuel Standard, which recognized corn ethanol as a low-carbon fuel.

Myth: Ethanol subsidies are expensive and ineffective.

FACT: The only reason the ethanol industry needs government support today is because we are denied access to all but ten percent of the fuel market which is tightly controlled by the oil industry. Growth Energy's Fueling Freedom plan would, after a one-year extension, redirect tax credits to build out a national ethanol infrastructure, such as blender pumps and flex fuel vehicles, to allow more fair and open access to the fuels market. Further, the EPA's recent decision, based on a sound body of science, to allow E15 is an important step to expanding the availability and use of ethanol in the U.S.

If there are subsidies that should expire, let's start with

the more than \$200 billion in taxpayer dollars given to Big Oil every year. According to a recent analysis by DTN/The Progressive Farmer, that's the cost of state and federal tax credits and other financial incentives, as well as the cost of a permanent U.S. military presence in the Persian Gulf to protect our access to oil.

Myth: Higher blends of ethanol are bad for your car.

FACT: History shows that ethanol has been a viable transportation fuel since the inception of the American automotive industry. Henry Ford's first automobile was designed to burn on ethanol, and ethanol was heavily used by Americans during both World War I and World War II. Indeed, oil companies need to enhance the octane of conventional gasoline, and require high-octane ethanol to meet the fuel performance standards of today's engines. In

fact, oil companies attempted to replace ethanol as an octane enhancer, and did so for years with lead, until federally-mandated public health standards required the removal of lead from gasoline. Today, the science overwhelmingly supports E15 as a viable fuel. In fact, there has been more testing of E15 than there has been of any other fuel mix in the history of the EPA waiver process. Research supporting use of E15 covers many areas: performance, emissions, materials durability, compatibility with fuel infrastructure and more. The EPA's recent decision to allow E15 in cars 2007 and newer proves that higher blends of ethanol will have no impact on newer vehicles - nearly 20 percent of the car park. Testing on cars 2001-2006 model years are anticipated to demonstrate, similarly, that they are compatible with E15. Earlier Department of Energy testing of mid-level ethanol blends in even older cars, dating back to 1999, showed no issues with drivability and engine durability.

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