



NNFCC and Myerscough College – Racing Towards a Greener Future



NEC Birmingham, January 11-14, 2007- In a unique collaboration, Myerscough College and the National Non-Food Crops Centre (NNFCC) are driving motorsports forwards into a sustainable future using biofuels and renewable technologies. A Formula 3-99 Dallara racing car prepared by students at Myerscough College, complete with NNFCC livery, will be on display at the Autosport International Racing Car Show at the NEC in Birmingham from 11-14th January 2007. The car is part of Myerscough College's biofuels research program and will be tested running on various blends of bioethanol.

Bioethanol is a fuel made from crop plants which releases much less carbon dioxide into the atmosphere than fossil fuels such as petrol. A sustainable future for motoring depends on biofuels, which allow motorists to drive without adding to global warming. Having a higher octane rating than petrol, bioethanol can therefore be used in high performance vehicles as well as conventional cars.

Autosport International is the biggest motorsports show in the world, with over 90,000 visitors expected over four days. NNFCC staff will attend on 11th January to perform interviews and report on the potential for renewable technologies and materials in the automotive industry. Myerscough College will be active throughout the 4 day show, displaying the F3 car and promoting their motorsports education and research facilities.



The links between agriculture and the motor industry have never been stronger, with biofuels and renewable materials derived from crops spearheading innovation in motorsports. In addition, as fuel efficiency and minimising greenhouse gas emissions become increasingly important for us all, innovation in the motorsports industry is becoming more relevant to mainstream car manufacturers and the public. The car of the future is likely to be highly efficient, made of lighter, renewable and recyclable materials, and will run on biofuels, either used alone or blended with petrol or diesel.

Myerscough College is the largest land-based college in the UK, with almost 200 students studying motorsports on further and higher education courses. Through their collaboration, NNFCC and Myerscough College are able to fuel innovation and growth in both the motor industry and the renewables sector. The College will run a biofuel-powered vehicle in the British Off-Road Championship in 2007.

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Additional Notes

Bioethanol is a petrol substitute made by fermenting sugars found in crops such as wheat, corn and sugar cane. Ethanol produced during fermentation is purified by distillation. Bioethanol provides higher octane ratings than conventional fossil fuel such as petrol, and this makes it a perfect component of fuel for sports cars and other high performance applications. Bioethanol can be blended with petrol in car engines: all UK cars can run on 5% bioethanol blends. In the future, higher percentage blends will become increasingly common as car manufacturers market more environmentally friendly vehicles. Some of these are already on the market.

Bioethanol is manufactured from plants, which absorb carbon dioxide (a major greenhouse gas) as they grow. Therefore, using bioethanol instead of petrol significantly reduces greenhouse gas emissions (by up to 80% using wheat as feedstock).

Other biofuels are available: biodiesel is manufactured from oilseed crops and has similar benefits when used in place of conventional diesel.

The biofuels industry in the UK is undergoing strong growth, with five established biodiesel production facilities in the UK, and six in the planning and construction stages. There are eight bioethanol facilities in planning and construction in the UK. From available production dates, by the end of 2008 biofuel production capacity in the UK will be 2.2 million tonnes (figures from nnfcc.co.uk). Current capacity is around 450,000 tonnes. The Government is promoting the use of biofuel, and has introduced legislation requiring UK road transport fuels to contain 5% biofuel by 2010.

These innovations have benefits not only for the environment, but also the economy. Crop-based technologies in motorsports are based on agriculture and small local businesses, and national fuel- and car-manufacturing companies will also benefit. In addition, these technologies will filter down into mainstream use, leading to real environmental and economic benefits as biofuels and renewable materials are adopted by large fuel and car manufacturers. NNFCC and Myerscough College are proud to be at the forefront of this exciting process.

NNFCC is an independent centre which exists to establish supply chains and inform Government, Industry and the public about renewable materials and technologies. The NNFCC aims to provide an unbiased information source and publicise the existence of alternative technologies where they are available.

Renewable materials and technologies

The majority of fuels and many materials such as plastics currently in mainstream use are derived from fossil fuels: coal, natural gas and oil. The use of these materials leads to the accumulation of greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere, which is causing climate change and global warming. The alternatives to these materials and fuels are renewable materials: renewable because they are derived from crops which can be grown repeatedly, absorbing CO₂ as they do so. Renewable materials can provide substitutes for textiles, plastics, fuels, building materials, insulation, packaging and oils. The consequences of climate change have recently been quantified in ecological and economic terms eg. by the Stern Review, and it has been accepted by major governments that climate change must be tackled rapidly and effectively over the next 10-15 years in order to prevent enormous economic and ecological losses. The adoption of renewable technologies will make a significant impact on climate change over the next 10-15 years. The uptake of these new materials requires acceptance by the public and legislation to ensure the growth of these new industries. High quality information sources are crucial in ensuring their success. The NNFCC is the UK's principal information source on these technologies.

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