

Re: Energy Cost of Ethanol

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- *From:* Greg Hansen <glhansen@xxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Mon, 03 Jul 2006 14:05:54 -0500
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jmfbahciv@xxxxxxx wrote:

In article <1151851343.354519.286170@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>, "glhansen@xxxxxxx" <glhansen@xxxxxxx> wrote:

jmfbahciv@xxxxxxx wrote:

More
expensive alternative fuels will make
economic sense to develop.

A person who knew economics told me that the price has to
get
to ~\$12/gallon before alternatives will become "cheaper".

Now that's hard to interpret. Especially "'cheaper'".

Oh, "cheaper" from the point of view of the consumer. When
it costs \$100,000 to be warm in the winter, I'll be switching from buying oil to heat my house
to something else.

Ethanol is
already cheaper than that.

But it isn't popular yet, where popular is accepted by more than
45% [guesstimate of how many people it takes for a new thing

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to move from a fad of the haves to a requirement for everyone].
You also need the lead time of establishing the infrastructure.

Diesel isn't popular, either. But a lot of it is used, including by consumer vehicles. It doesn't have to be "popular" to be "cheap".

How do you keep dunderheads like me from filling my tank with ethanol instead of gas? A study of what had to be done

How do you keep dunderheads from plugging the 60 volt line into the TTL socket when they're side by side and identical connectors? Sometimes you just have to get the grad student to fix the damage.

But, lesson learned, I think I'd make the ethanol nozzle incompatible with the gasoline socket. Make it bigger, or put a flange on it or something. And the ethanol socket would be able to accept the standard gasoline nozzle. That would add a little to the conversion cost of an existing car. I'm assuming that there would be no vehicles that can burn ethanol and not gasoline.

to keep people from filling their car tanks with diesel when diesel pumps started showing up at gas stations would be useful. In the 70s, during the oil crises, there were no diesel pumps in gas stations. I knew one, and only one, person who owned a diesel automobile. And he had to hunt for a place to fill up. These pumps didn't show up until years after Mercedes started making diesel autos a status symbol.

The price of conversion would be high if it is a choice of a car that can only run on gasoline, or a car that can only run on ethanol. Flex fuel cars eliminate most of that price barrier.

I heard a report that Ford is concentrating on this rather than electric. The feedback from electric use must not have been encouraging. Note that my assumption here is that Ford isn't stupid, as it was in the 60s and 70s.

Whatever comes out, I think a migration path would be necessary. For a different example, the hybrid car that could have the tank filled at a gas station, or get the battery recharged as an electric car would.

I'm not a big fan of hydrogen, though.

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They can run any mix of gasoline and ethanol, and you can have a mechanic convert your car, if you like.

Yes, this is the best plan.

Ethanol didn't really take off in Brazil until flex fuel came along. But, in Brazil, they get more miles per dollar with ethanol than with gasoline.

But can it drive a truck with a heavy load? I need more stats before I can judge about better miles/gallon...oh. you said miles per dollar. Does Brazil subsidize ethanol?

Yes, miles per dollar. I think gasoline actually gives you more miles per gallon. I don't think Brazil subsidizes ethanol, but labor is cheap and they have good land for growing sugar cane. The switch was driven by economics.

Maybe they will and maybe they won't become very cheap with R&D and economies of scale, but they only have to become cheaper than the rest. When farm land and water resources become too valuable to grow fuel, it will be used to grow food,

But it's not. Land is being used to grow million dollar shacks with an ugly monoculture surrounding it.

Because it's still so cheap.

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It is not cheap. People simply have too much funny money.

Not a bad way to put it. And then interest rates shift and the balloon payment comes due.

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