GROUNDBREAKING STUDY FINDS THAT CERTAIN ETHANOL BLENDS CAN PROVIDE BETTER FUEL ECONOMY THAN GASOLINE

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Groundbreaking Study Finds that Certain Ethanol Blends can Provide Better Fuel Economy than Gasoline

"Optimal Blend" Is Likely E20 or E30;
Coalition Calls for Further Government Research

Sioux Falls, SD (December 5, 2007)- Research findings released today show that mid-range ethanol blends - fuel mixtures with more ethanol than E10 but less than E85 - can in some cases provide better fuel economy than regular unleaded gasoline, even in standard, non-flex-fuel vehicles.

Previous assumptions held that ethanol's lower energy content directly correlates with lower fuel economy for drivers. Those assumptions were found to be incorrect. Instead, the new research strongly suggests that there is an "optimal blend level" of ethanol and gasoline - most likely E20 or E30 - at which cars will get better mileage than predicted based strictly on the fuel's per-gallon Btu content. The new study, cosponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy and the American Coalition for Ethanol (ACE), also found that mid-range ethanol blends reduce harmful tailpipe emissions.

"Initial findings indicate that we as a nation haven't begun to recognize the value of ethanol," said Brian Jennings, executive vice president of the American Coalition for Ethanol. "This is a compelling argument for more research on the promise of higher ethanol blends in gasoline. There is strong evidence that the optimal ethanol-gasoline blend for standard, non-flex-fuel vehicles is greater than E10 and instead may be E20 or E30. We encourage the federal government to move swiftly to research the use of higher ethanol blends and make necessary approvals so that American motorists can have the cost-effective ethanol choices they deserve at the pump."

The University of North Dakota Energy & Environmental Research Center (EERC) and the Minnesota Center for Automotive Research (MnCAR) conducted the research using four 2007 model vehicles: a Toyota Camry, a Ford Fusion, and two Chevrolet Impalas, one flex-fuel and one non-flex-fuel. Researchers used the EPA Highway Fuel Economy Test (HWFET) to examine a range of ethanol-gasoline blends from straight Tier 2 gasoline up to 85 percent ethanol. All of the vehicles got better mileage with ethanol blends than the ethanol's energy content would predict, and three out of four actually traveled farther on a mid-level ethanol blend than on unleaded gasoline.

In addition to the favorable fuel economy findings, the research provides strong evidence that standard, non-flex-fuel vehicles can operate on ethanol blends beyond 10 percent. The three non-flex-fuel vehicles tested operated on levels as high as E65 before any engine fault codes were displayed. Emissions results for the ethanol blends were also favorable for nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide and nonmethane organic gases, showing an especially significant reduction in CO2 emissions for each vehicle's "optimal" ethanol blend.

To read full press release and the full study results visit
http://www.ethanol.org/news/index.php?newsid=25