

2017 IRFA Biofuels: Science and Sustainability Tour Recap

The Iowa Renewable Fuels Association (IRFA) recently hosted the 9th Annual Biofuels: Science and Sustainability Tour, which brings Washington, D.C. decision makers to Iowa for an up-close, hands-on experience with today's renewable fuels industry. This year's tour took a record number of participants on an engaging biofuels journey, visiting an ethanol plant, biodiesel plant, a cellulosic ethanol facility, a family farm, and so much more!

With debate over the role and future of the federal Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) at fever pitch, and Iowa's first in the nation status in regard to renewable fuels production, the tour allowed policy makers to discuss important issues facing the renewable fuels industry, including the RFS, point of obligation, and E15 RVP parity.



Tour participants represented the offices of Representatives Bonnie Watson Coleman (NJ), David Young (IA), Don Bacon (NE), Don Young (AR), Joe Barton (TX), Juan Vargas (CA), Leonard Lance (NJ), Lynn Jenkins (KS), Matt Cartwright (PA), Paul Tonko (NY), Rod Blum (IA), Rodney Davis (IL), Salud Carbajal (CA), Steve King (IA), Tom Emmer (MN), Yvette Clarke (NY), Senators John Thune (SD), Joni Ernst (IA), Lindsey Graham (SC), Pat Roberts (KS), Tim Kaine (VA), Governor Kim Reynolds (IA), the Senate Finance Committee, Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, House Committee on Agriculture, the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL). (Photo by Dennis Schroeder / NREL)

2017 Biofuels Tour Day 1

Tour participants visited the Iowa State Fair and heard from Iowa Lt. Governor Adam Gregg, Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey, and several FFA students on the importance of renewable fuels and agriculture to the state of Iowa. Tour attendees also had the opportunity to visit many Iowa State Fair attractions, including the Animal Learning Center, prize-winning Iowa livestock animals, cutting-edge farming technology, and more!



2017 Biofuels Tour Day 2

Monsanto Huxley Learning Center

Day two kicked off at the Monsanto Huxley Learning Center in Huxley, Iowa where attendees participated in an interactive tour that gave an in-depth look at modern farm technology, seed technology, how precision agriculture impacts today's farm practices and environmental conservation, and future improvements to come.



April Hemmes Family Farm

At April Hemmes' family farm in Hampton, Iowa attendees learned first hand from April and other local farmers about planting and harvesting practices for corn and soybeans, how those two crops serve as feedstock for ethanol and biodiesel, modern conservation practices, and about the role drone technology plays in modern agriculture. Grant Kimberley from the Iowa Soybean Association and other Iowa Soybean Association experts gave presentations specifically on soybean plants and biodiesel. Iowa Corn Board Member Chris Edgington discussed the science of growing corn and modern corn-production practices.



Golden Grain Energy

Participants toured Golden Grain Energy, a 115 million-gallon capacity ethanol plant, in Mason City, Iowa where they learned about the ethanol production process and co-products such as distiller's grains, a high-protein animal feed. Geoff Cooper, senior vice president of the Renewable Fuels Association, also gave a "Myth Busters" presentation on common misconceptions about renewable fuels.



2017 Biofuels Tour Day 3

REG – Mason City

On day three attendees toured Renewable Energy Group – Mason City, a 30 million-gallon capacity biodiesel plant, and received a biodiesel policy overview from Rosemarie Calabro Tully, National Biodiesel Board’s director of federal communications. Participants learned how biodiesel is made and the benefits of this advanced biofuel to the natural environment.



Magellan Pipeline Company

Tour attendees visited the Magellan fuel terminal in Clear Lake, Iowa where they learned about fuel storage, distribution, and the process of blending various fuel options such as E15 and B20.



DuPont Cellulosic Ethanol

Participants enjoyed a bus tour through the grounds of DuPont Cellulosic Ethanol in Nevada, Iowa, one of the nation’s largest cellulosic ethanol plants. Steven Ogle from Dupont Cellulosic Ethanol joined the tour to give attendees an overview of plant operations and the growth potential for the cellulosic ethanol sector.



Good & Quick Fuel Station

Participants met Good & Quick owner Charlie Good in Nevada, who shared his story of breaking his contract with an oil company to offer renewable fuels such as E15 and E85. Tour attendees got a tutorial on using a blender pump and learned about why offering renewable fuels makes good business sense for fuel retailers.



Couser Cattle Company



At Couser Cattle Company in Nevada, Bill Couser led a tour of his farm and gave a wide overview of various aspects of Iowa's agriculture industry — including growing row crops, raising cattle, producing renewable fuels, and enacting environmental practices — and how they are all connected. He also highlighted the use of the ethanol co-product distillers grains as a high-protein feed for his cattle. Couser Cattle Company is a multi-faceted livestock and row crop operation that finishes 5,000 to 6,000 head of cattle, while also farming about 5,000 acres of corn and soybeans. Bill is the 2011 National Cattlemen's Foundation Environmental Stewardship Award winner.

2017 Biofuels Tour Day 4

Iowa State University BioCentury Research Farm and Sorenson Farm



On the final day of the tour, attendees visited the Iowa State University Sorenson Research Farm and BioCentury Research Farm. At the Sorenson Farm participants learned about giant miscanthus and biochar and potential for future use of these sustainable commodities in the biofuels industry.

At the Biocentury Research Farm attendees learned about the many biomass-related research projects happening at ISU today – including algae growth as a form of water treatment. Dr. Sebastien Pouliot gave a presentation on the economics of consumer use of E85 and Dr. Robert Brown discussed the issue of carbon removal from the atmosphere and the role agriculture and biofuels play.



***Photos Courtesy of Dennis Schroeder/NREL**

The Biofuels: Science and Sustainability Tour would not be possible without our sponsors. Thank you to all our sponsors!

