The Iowa Renewable Fuels Association (IRFA) recently hosted the 6th Annual Biofuels: Science and Sustainability Tour. The tour once again brought Washington, D.C. policymakers and regulators to Iowa for a firsthand experience with Iowa's renewable fuels industry and agricultural community. The three-day educational outing provided participants an opportunity to engage in substantive dialogue with renewable fuels experts, agriculture leaders, and state and university officials on important policy matters, regulatory concerns and technical issues facing the renewable fuels industry. In addition, the tour gave participants a hands-on experience with some of the most exciting breakthroughs taking place in Iowa’s most dynamic sector of the economy.

This year's tour was hosted and sponsored by Iowa State University Bioeconomy Institute, Iowa Renewable Fuels Association, National Biodiesel Foundation, Renewable Fuels Foundation, Iowa Corn Growers Association, Iowa Biodiesel Board, Iowa Soybean Association, Western Dubuque Biodiesel, Big River United Energy, FEC Solutions, Iowa State University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and Iowa EPSCoR.

Not surprisingly, hot topics like the federal Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS), E15, the so-called blendwall, the biodiesel tax incentive, and cellulosic biofuels were major areas of discussion throughout the tour. Nevertheless, other areas of focus included the Farm Bill, food and fuel, distillers grains and other co-products, crop yield trends, improved environmental practices in agriculture and renewable fuels production, biomass crops, and the benefits of a vibrant agricultural economy to businesses and communities in rural America.

The tour included visits to Western Dubuque Biodiesel's production facility in Farley, Iowa, Big River United Energy's ethanol refinery in Dyersville, Iowa, Ulch Farms in Solon, Iowa, Archer Daniels Midland's (ADM) corn processing facility in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Fiberight's cellulosic ethanol production facility construction site in Blairstown, Iowa, Iowa State University’s Sorenson Farm and Biocentury Research Farm in Boone, Iowa, DuPont Cellulosic Ethanol construction site in Nevada, Iowa, Couser Cattle Company in Nevada, Iowa, FEC Solutions in Des Moines, Iowa, and the Iowa State Fair in Des Moines, Iowa.
Tour participants represented the following offices: U.S. EPA, Office of Transportation and Air Quality and Office of Air and Radiation; U.S. House Committee on Agriculture; U.S. Representatives Collin Peterson (MN), Ann McLane Kuster (NH), Mike McIntyre (NC), David Scott (GA), Bruce Braley (IA), Dave Loebsack (IA), Tom Latham (IA), and Steve King (IA); U.S. Senators Chuck Grassley (IA), John Thune (SD), Mark Udall (CO), and Ron Wyden (OR); Governors' Biofuels Coalition; Midwestern Governors Association; and Office of Governor Terry Branstad.

Monday, August 11

Welcome dinner and opening presentation by IRFA Executive Director Monte Shaw.

Tuesday, August 12

Biodiesel 101: Learning About Biodiesel Production and Biodiesel Policy
Tour Participants learned about biodiesel policy and production from National Biodiesel Board (NBB) Director of Regulatory Affairs Lindsay Fitzgerald (top-left; bottom-right) and Western Dubuque Biodiesel General Manager Tom Brooks (bottom-left).

Tour of Western Dubuque Biodiesel in Farley, Iowa

Participants received a tour of Western Dubuque Biodiesel's 30 million gallon per year biodiesel production facility located in Farley, Iowa.
Tour Participants learned about the ethanol production process from Big River United Energy Manager of Operations Stan Janson (top-left) and Chief Operating Officer Jim Leiting (top-right).

Participants also learned about retailing infrastructure and higher ethanol blends, including E15 and E85, from the Renewable Fuels Association's (RFA) Geoff Cooper (left).

To view Cooper's presentation, please click here.

Tour of Big River United Energy in Dyersville, Iowa

Participants experienced first-hand the inner workings of ethanol production when they toured Big River United Energy, a 100 million gallon per year ethanol plant in Dyersville, Iowa.
Tour participants learned a great deal about feed, fuel, and the dry mill ethanol production process while seeing Big River United Energy's ethanol plant in action.

Tour of Ulch Farms in Solon, Iowa
Participants received an up-close and personal experience with the latest practices to increase yields, maximize efficiency, and protect the environment while raising crops in Iowa at Ulch Farms in Solon, Iowa.

Tour participants also learned about biodiesel feedstocks, biodiesel co-products, and the benefits of biodiesel production to farmers and livestock producers from the National Biodiesel Board's Alan Weber and Iowa Biodiesel Board's Grant Kimberley.

To view their presentation, please click here.
Wednesday, August 14

Tour of Fiberight in Blairstown, Iowa

Participants learned about new, forward-thinking biofuels processes at the construction site of Fiberight in Blairstown, Iowa, where the company will use an innovative process to turn municipal solid waste into cellulosic ethanol.
Tour of Iowa State University's Sorenson Farm and BioCentury Research Farm in Ames, Iowa

Tour participants learned firsthand the latest on row crops, cover crops and dedicated energy crops at Iowa State University's Sorenson Farm. Above the group is pictured standing in front of a plot of giant miscanthus.
Tour of DuPont Cellulosic Ethanol construction site in Nevada, Iowa
Participants received a walking tour of the **DuPont Cellulosic Ethanol** construction site, where more than 800 employees are working to complete construction on this 30 million gallon per year corn stover to cellulosic ethanol production facility in Nevada, Iowa.

Tour of Couser Cattle Company in Nevada, Iowa

Participants learned about environmental stewardship and how livestock producers benefit from renewable fuels production from **Bill Couser** at **Couser Cattle Company**.

**Thursday, August 15**

Tour of FEC Solutions in Des Moines, Iowa
Participants explored **FEC Solutions** in Des Moines to learn about innovations that are adding value to ethanol and biodiesel co-products, such as corn oil and glycerin.

**Lunch at the Iowa State Fair in Des Moines, Iowa**
Tour participants heard from **Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey** on the strength and resilience of Iowa agriculture and the importance of a strong and growing Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) at the **Iowa State Fair**.