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### Citizens Asked to Turn Turkey Grease into Biofuel

November 23rd, 2005 @ 4:17pm

by Associated Press

You've roasted your holiday turkey and drained off some of the juices and fat for making gravy. Or you've deep-fried a delicious bird in a vat of cooking oil.

So how do you get rid of the frying oil or the goeey brown liquid left in the gunk-encrusted roasting pan?

Most holiday cooks will pour it down the drain or in the garbage, but a Tucson-based company has another idea for local cooks: hand it over for recycling.

Tucson-based Greecycle has partnered with the Tucson Regional Clean Cities Coalition and Pima County Wastewater Management in its first annual Thanksgiving grease recycling drive to collect cooking oil and grease.

Bioengineer Michael Kazz founded Greecycle about a year ago, stockpiling ``yellow grease" and converting some of it to biodiesel for his own fleet of trucks and for vehicle fleets of companies his firm is partnered with.

``We're what you call a rendering company, really a grease recycling company," he said. It collects used cooking oil from scores of restaurants in Tucson, and is looking to expand operations to other cities, such as Sierra Vista, with a plethora of fast-food restaurants.

The fuel is approved by Environmental Protection Agency and by the National Biodiesel Board, Kazz said. His company is the first such firm operating in Arizona.

Biodiesel is part of a growing environmental movement aimed at cutting into America's dependence on foreign oil by recycling something that normally is thrown away, said Colleen Crowninshield, manager of the Clean Cities Program at the Pima Association of Governments.

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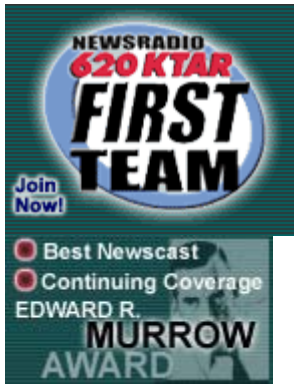
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A number of cities and states have active biodiesel fuel programs.

`` All municipal wastewater treatment systems see a higher incidence of backups and backflows" each January and February, after the Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's holidays, because of vast amounts of cooking grease poured down kitchen drains, Kazz and Crowninshield said.

`` Every gallon they collect is a gallon that may not be going into a landfill or down a sewer," Kazz said.

Every gallon of yellow grease produces a gallon of biodiesel. `` When you look at the emissions reductions, the reductions are astounding," Crowninshield said.

Two forms of biodiesel fuel - one called B-20, containing 20 percent biodiesel and 80 percent petroleum diesel, and the other a 100 percent biodiesel product - can reduce unburned hydrocarbons by 20 and 67 percent, carbon monoxide by 12 and 48 percent, and particulate matter by 12 and 47 percent, respectively, Crowninshield said.

B-20 can be run by most diesel-engine vehicles, but the 100 percent formula can cause vehicles to run sluggish.

`` We'll be small players, but we plan to go commercial with fuel production sometime next year," Kazz said. `` Our plans are to produce in the neighborhood of 150,000 gallons a year."

Kazz said that if all used cooking oils were collected nationwide and converted into biodiesel, that would provide between 1 and 2 percent of the country's diesel fuel needs.



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