

Student notes importance of ethanol use

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — DuPont Crop Protection and the Agriculture Council of America (ACA) announce the national 2006 Ag Day Essay Contest winner, Ashley Julka.

Julka, a 10th grader at Laconia High School, Rosendale, Wis., was named the state winner and overall national winner of the "Growing Our Energy: Alternative Fuels From Agriculture" themed contest.

Julka received a \$1,000 prize and a roundtrip ticket to Washington, D.C. where she was recognized at the National Ag Day Luncheon held March 16 at the National Press Club.

Growing Our Energy: Alternative Fuels from Agriculture

By Ashley Julka
In the early days, people lived simple lives. New explorations led to the discovery of coal and oil.

As people became accustomed to these "natural" resources, our country gradually evolved from a nation relying almost exclusively on renewable sources of fuel such as wood, wind, and water power to one relying almost totally on natural (nonrenewable) sources.

While this has been a tremendous asset to our country's growth, we know that these "natural" energy sources are dwindling and won't last forever. Thus, the quest for finding more efficient ways of using homegrown fuels has escalated. We need to continue to research and



develop homegrown fuels such as ethanol, biodiesel, and methane gas, which will allow us to become less dependent on foreign countries.

One new, promising form of homegrown fuel is ethanol. Ethanol is a fuel made from wheat, corn, or barley, grown across the United States. These grains are put through grinders, changing it into a colorless, liquid fuel.

Ethanol burns cleaner, is better for our environment, and helps absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. By using gasoline-containing ethanol, we're using home-

grown products. Not only does this reduce our dependency on foreign oil, but it also helps the American economy.

In Wisconsin alone, ethanol production has gone from zero to 250 million gallons in five years. Biodiesel is another form of homegrown fuel. It's made from renewable resources including soybeans, waste grease from restaurants, and animal and vegetable fats.

Biodiesel can be used most die-

sel fuel tanks. It can help keep our air cleaner by reducing carbon monoxide, particulates, and more.

According to a study conducted by the U.S. Department of Energy, biodiesel exhaust won't cause eye irritation, is biodegradable, reduces cancer risks, and enhances engine performance. By using biodiesel instead of traditional diesel fuel, we once again support the American farmer.

Another homegrown energy source is methane gas. It's produced from cattle manure and transferred to energy by using a methane digester. The gas is trapped, sent to an electric generator where it is turned into energy, and sold back to the power company. Farmers benefit from this because they use their own sources of waste and profit from it.

In summary, as we look to the future of this great country, we should first look at the past. We can and must find ways to incorporate the use of those early renewable fuels with these new and promising homegrown fuels, as well as harvesting wind and solar power, to ensure our country's economic stability and reduce our dependence on foreign countries.

If we succeed, the United States of America will truly continue to be "the land of the free and the home of the brave."

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