

Parker Filtration Technology Demonstrates Quality Of Home-made Biodiesel

By 4 C M

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Philip and Michael Bates, the brothers behind MPB Bioproducts, are running one of the tractors on their farm using 100% biodiesel produced using their own crop. Essential to this demonstration of the performance of their home-made fuel has been the latest filtration technology from Parker, which is enabling the biofuel to be used in the tractor's conventional diesel engine.

Philip and Michael Bates have been investigating the potential for green technology on their farm in Willingham by Stow near Gainsborough for some time. After setting up a compost collection scheme for residents in the area, and using the green waste on the farm, the brothers decided to take things a stage further and produce their own biofuel from oilseed rape grown using the compost.

They looked at a number of on-farm biodiesel plants, although none seemed to be at the high standard that they were looking for. However, at the annual Biofuels Expo in Newark, they discovered a Lincolnshire company that specialised in biodiesel plants and, confident that they had found the right solution, the brothers installed a £200,000 plant on the farm.

They are now running one of the farm's tractors on the plant's biodiesel, to prove that it is of a high enough quality to be used as a fuel in its own right, rather than as a 5% additive to conventional diesel. Essential to making this possible was the ability to filter the fuel effectively, so that the biodiesel would work with the conventional diesel engine.

The tractor being used to display the performance of the home-made fuel was supplied to the brothers with a Racor biofuel conversion kit installed on the filtration system. This would allow the vehicle's engine to run effectively and reliably on the biofuel.

At the Biofuels Expo, Parker Racor specialists also advised Philip and Michael Bates on the particle counting technology available to help them monitor the water content of their fuel after the production process. This has been an integral part of the brothers' success in producing biofuel of a high enough standard to be used as 100% fuel.

While the production and use of biodiesel introduces many challenges, it also provides a number of benefits in addition to its environmental credentials, including lower taxation and the ability to use or sell the spent rapeseed as cattle feed. With effective filtration, the fuel can be used in exactly the same way as mineral diesel, and is capable of maintaining previous performance levels.

Philip Bates commented, "By being able to use our fuel on our own tractor, we have been able to demonstrate the quality of the biodiesel and attract buyers. The potential for biofuels is huge; by using just 10% of our field to grow crops for production we have been able to produce enough biodiesel for all our farm equipment and processes. We are extremely passionate about environmental issues and it's great that the technology is now out there to help people like us develop greener solutions."

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