

News from

THE BROADS HIRE BOAT FEDERATION

Forty Broads hire boats to trial bio-diesel

Forty holiday motor cruisers from eight boatyards will be trialling bio-diesel by next year as part of a major, two-year project by the Broads Hire Boat Federation. Three boatyards have already started using the fuel, with a total of nine of their craft using 100% biodiesel. Similar “control” boats will be part of the tests, using normal diesel fuel, for performance comparison research. The biodiesel is manufactured by Global Commodities of Dereham from recycled vegetable oils, making it very valuable in reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

As part of the project the engine emissions from two cruisers were tested last week to find out how much cleaner the bio-diesel is than conventional fuel. Researchers from Newcastle University carried out these tests and the results, to be published next month, will provide positive evidence of the benefits of the fuel.

The environmentally friendly fuel has been the subject of earlier research in this country and the USA, and evidence suggests that it has many positive effects. Since biodiesel is made entirely from vegetable oil it does not contain any sulphur, aromatic hydrocarbons, metals or crude oil residues. The lack of toxic and carcinogenic aromatics means that the combustion gases have a reduced effect on human health. The fuel burns more cleanly, giving lower ‘soot’ and lower CO emissions. The detailed testing that is being carried out by Newcastle University will quantify all these benefits.

The Broads is the first place in the UK to use substantial quantities of this type of fuel in boats and, with growing interest from visitors wishing to enjoy the natural environment without causing damage, it should help to encourage sustainable growth in holiday trade. Unfortunately, at present the price of biodiesel is higher than fossil diesel so financial support for the tests has been necessary and £43,000 of the total project costs of £72,300 is being provided by the Broads Authority Sustainable Development Fund, with grant aid from DEFRA. However, as the price of conventional fuel rises, any tax incentives introduced for bio-fuels may well make biodiesel financially attractive and the experience gained from the project will enable much wider use.

Broads Hire Boat Federation Chairman, Ken Gaylard said, “We are extremely pleased to be involved in this practical research project on the Broads. When evaluated at the end of the two year period, we expect that these trials will point the way towards an environmentally friendly power source for Broads boats at an affordable price.”

NOTES for Editors:

1. The Broads Hire Boat Federation is the trade association for holiday boat operators on the Norfolk Broads. For technical queries contact:
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2. Eight boatyards are participating in the trial:
 - Faircraft Loynes, Wroxham
 - Alexander Cruisers, Brundall
 - Sabena Marine, Hoveton
 - Barnes Brinkcraft, Hoveton,
 - Connoisseur Cruisers, Wroxham
 - Silverline Marine, Brundall
 - City Boats, Thorpe
 - Eastwood Whelpton, Upton

3. The emissions tests were carried out by Newcastle University's Department of Marine Science and Technology. Two hire boats were tested, one from Faircraft Loynes and one from Alexander Cruisers.