

Wheat may join corn in biofuels

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British-led scientists have developed a new technology that might eventually enable motorists to use wheat, as well as corn, for biofuels.

While most bio-ethanol in the United States is made from corn, the researchers said wheat might be the preferred cereal grain for bio-ethanol production in Europe, where the grain is more widely grown. But conventional methods for producing bio-ethanol from wheat are complex and inefficient.

In the new study, Apostolis Koutinas and colleagues at the University of Manchester created a simplified bio-refining method that uses fewer steps and less energy, but generates fewer waste products. Depending on the selected combination of physical and biological treatment, the process also is said to yield various fractions enriched in bran, wheat germ and proteins that could be sold or utilized in value-added products, boosting income of bio-refineries, the scientists said.

"This process," they said, "could substitute for the conventional wheat dry milling process that is currently employed in industry."

The research appears in the Aug. 3 issue of the journal *Biotechnology Progress*.

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