

'Sweet' chemicals from a 'green' raw material

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The biobased world's traditional focus on producing fuels for cars, trucks and aircraft is quietly undergoing a major transition this summer toward production of chemicals needed for manufacture of hundreds of different consumer products, according to an article in the current edition of *Chemical & Engineering News* (C&EN). The cover story appears in the weekly newsmagazine of the American Chemical Society, the world's largest scientific society.

Melody M. Bomgardner, C&EN senior business editor, points out that until now, petroleum has been the mainstay raw material for producing ingredients sold to companies that make medicines, detergents, plastics and other products. However, a small group of companies is making the leap this summer to using basic compounds for these products that are made from sugar, a renewable resource. The last few months have been a dynamic time for the rapidly growing sector.

Six companies have opened manufacturing plants that are already operating or will go on line soon, and three others plan to open new facilities next year. Bomgardner cites estimates that these and other firms will be making 5.5 million tons of biobased chemicals annually by 2015. Though it will take a few years for production to gain steam, Bomgardner says analysts agree that this summer is a turning point for the industry and production of chemicals from sugar.

More information: "Biobased Summer" cen.acs.org/articles/90/i38/Su..._based-Chemicals.html

Provided by American Chemical Society

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