

Book a flight on 'Air Algae?'

13 June 2012

When the smell of french fries wafts through the airplane cabin, is it from that guy in 24D scarfing down a fast-food meal - or the jet engines? That question certainly could be food-for-thought for imaginative passengers, as airline companies develop a bigger appetite for the fuels described in the current edition of *Chemical & Engineering News* (C&EN), the weekly newsmagazine of the American Chemical Society, the world's largest scientific society.

In the article, C&EN Senior Business Editor Melody M. Bomgardner explains that with successful test flights completed, airlines are ready and eager to fuel up with biobased [jet](#) fuel. That's fuel made from waste cooking oil from fast-food and other restaurants, waste fat, biomass and even algae - the stuff of "pond scum." Biobased fuels are blended into conventional Jet A-1 fuel. Airlines are interested partly because of rising costs for petroleum-based jet fuel.

Bomgardner notes that even though test flights, like a recent United Airlines flight from Houston to Chicago on a 40/60 mixture of bio- and conventional fuel, were a success, a lack of suppliers is making it harder for biobased jet fuels to get off the ground. One major barrier: a shortage of feedstocks like algae oil, waste cooking oil and [fuel](#) crops, which makes green jet fuels more expensive. Both the airlines and the biofuel producers are hopeful, however, that support from the private sector and the government will allow these green fuels to fly soon.

More information: "Flying The Green Skies With Biofuels" cen.acs.org/articles/90/i24/FI...-Skies-Biofuels.html

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