

Alcohol distillery plans follow gasohol popularity

By Ron Ruggless

Because of the popularity of a combination alcohol and gasoline fuel (gasohol) in Nebraska, financing is being sought for an alcohol distillery in the state. Nebraska's Agricultural Products Industrial Utilization Committee is looking for \$21 million dollars to build the industrial grade grain alcohol plant.

"We're leaving it open for investment from a private company," said Charles Fricke, committee administrator.

If no private corporation is interested in its construction, he said, the plant may be built with state or federal funds and leased to a private company.

"We may also try to get a grain check-off referendum passed," Fricke said, "where grain farmers would contribute so many dollars per bushel (such as one cent) toward a grain alcohol plant."

Eastern Nebraska

William Scheller, UNL Chemical Engineering Dept. chairman, said a grain alcohol plant probably would be constructed in the eastern part of the state because

it would use milo and corn for distilling, two products found in eastern Nebraska.

The proposed plant would produce 20 million gallons of 200-proof alcohol, which would be enough additive for 200 million gallons of gasohol, 20 percent of Nebraska's annual fuel consumption, he said.

Other than alcohol, he said, the plant would produce dried grain for cattle feed, a possible protein concentrate for human consumption and carbon dioxide, which could be sold to soft drink manufacturers or released harmlessly into the air.

Sheller said he is "99 per cent certain the plant will be fueled by coal, because of the economics" of the cheaper fuel.

If the plant could be built near a power generating plant, it could use electricity or steam power, he added.

Although several companies have shown interest in financing or running such a grain alcohol distillery, no commitments are being made, said Fricke.

Oil companies

"A few petroleum companies have

shown an interest in the plant," he said.

A protein extraction addition to the plant would cost an extra \$7 million, Sheller said. Since recovered protein must be approved by the Federal Drug Administration before it can be used commercially, it is unlikely a company would risk the extra cost, Sheller said.

Fricke said investors may want more proof of gasohol's practicality before becoming involved in the project.

Although the committee has conducted a two-million mile road test using gasohol and has found the product to be satisfactory in cars, Sheller said more proof probably will be needed because of the

large investment.

He said the fuel would be sold as a commercial petroleum product and the Legislature's three cent reduction on gasohol's gas tax probably would be kept intact.

The Legislature would not have to approve the plant's construction if it did not invest any state money in it, Fricke said.

"Nebraska is the only state, to my knowledge, that has started such a program through state government action," Fricke added, "and as far as I know, there is no other state with a program in such an advanced stage."

Prof is named top dietician

Marie Knickrehm, a UNL professor of foods and nutrition, was chosen Nebraska Outstanding Dietician by the 275-member Nebraska Dietetic Association earlier this month.

Hazel Anthony, College of Home Economics dean, said the award honors "con-

tribution to the American Dietetic Association."

Knickrehm is director of dietetic internships at UNL. She helped start the program in 1969 and served as president of the Nebraska Dietetic Association the same year.

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