

Guiding Principles for Biodiesel Sustainability

Sustainability: Meeting today's needs for environmental stewardship, economic prosperity, and quality of life without compromising future generations' ability to meet these needs for themselves.

Founded to offer a healthier, homegrown fuel, invigorate economies throughout the US, and increase energy independence, the US biodiesel industry has consistently sought to provide a sustainable solution to America's energy needs. Biodiesel offers significant greenhouse gas emissions reductions compared to its petroleum counterpart and has one of the greatest energy balances of any fuel available. U.S. regulations ensure that domestic biodiesel meets rigorous standards relating to environmental stewardship, stakeholder input, fair labor practices, and safe working conditions. Biodiesel creates meaningful jobs, strengthens our economies and increases energy and homeland security. By stimulating investment in agriculture, improving the economics of crop and animal agriculture (especially in developing counties), and augmenting supplies of protein critical to combating malnutrition, biodiesel strengthens food security.

Biodiesel is already one of the most sustainable fuels available today. And still one of its most compelling attributes is that it is a young industry with the opportunity to play an even greater role in a sustainable energy future. The US biodiesel industry is not only generating a product with documented health and environmental benefits, it has aggressively committed to continually increase its sustainability. As the science to measure the sustainability of renewable fuels develops and as our industry matures, NBB seeks to ensure a more sustainable future for our country and our industry by establishing the following sustainability principles.

The principles, much like an organization's mission and vision, are not regulations or standards. They are a set of ideals - goals for the entire industry as we collectively seek to grow and add value to our environment and community. Our objective is to ensure that the future will encourage new research and innovation; incorporate sound science and knowledge based on credible, transparent data; create mechanisms for continual assessment and improvement; and provide the opportunity for this fuel to realize its full potential as a sustainable domestic energy source.

The Sustainability Principles were primarily derived from existing principles developed by the Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels, the Sustainable Biodiesel Alliance and the 25x'25 group. Using these existing principles enabled NBB to bring these to our businesses quickly, to benefit from the feedback these groups have already solicited from a broad group of stakeholders, and to affirm common ground shared with other biofuel sustainability efforts. The principles were developed as a whole; individual principles were not meant to be taken outside the context of the complete document. NBB's Sustainability Principles reflect the specific needs of the US biodiesel industry while keeping in mind the global nature of sustainability.

In the future, NBB intends to develop guidance statements that provide elaboration on each principle. This guidance will also borrow from existing work from other biofuel sustainability initiatives wherever possible to prevent duplication of work and facilitate harmonization. The guidance statements can be used by the industry to inform the development of best management practices. This work is not intended to supplant other efforts related to biodiesel sustainability certification or to suggest support for any certification system. For the purposes of these Principles, "production," "producers," and "projects" refers to biodiesel feedstock production/preparation, conversion of feedstock to biodiesel, and biodiesel distribution.

Principles

1. Biodiesel production shall follow all applicable laws of the jurisdiction in which it is produced.
2. Biodiesel projects shall be developed and operated under appropriate, transparent, and participatory processes that involve all relevant stakeholders.
3. Biodiesel shall contribute to climate change mitigation by significantly reducing lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions as compared to fossil fuels. Producers shall strive to continuously improve that reduction.
4. Biodiesel production shall support human rights and labor rights, and shall ensure safe and decent working conditions.
5. Biodiesel production shall contribute to the social and economic development of local communities.
6. Biodiesel production shall strive to improve food security.
7. Throughout the supply chain, the biodiesel industry shall implement management systems that maintain and strive to improve biodiversity, areas of High Conservation Value, and the quality of natural resources such as soil, air, and water.
8. Biodiesel production shall respect natural resource rights, such as land and water rights.
9. All participants throughout biodiesel supply chain shall be dedicated to the ideal of continuous improvement. Members shall, through ongoing efforts, make advancements in the economic, social and environmental performance of the industry.