

According to analysis conducted by Argonne National

Laboratory, America's ethanol industry has shown efficiency gains in ethanol production. The report suggests ethanol facilities are using less energy and water than just five years ago while producing more ethanol.

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The analysis compares ethanol industry data from 2001 to 2006. In 2001, U.S. ethanol production was 1.77 billion gallons. In 2006, U.S. ethanol production was 4.9 billion gallons, an increase of 276%. During this period of production growth, the Argonne analysis shows significant improvement for ethanol's already green footprint. In the past five years, according to the analysis:

- Water consumption -- down 26.6%
- Grid electricity use -- down 15.7%
- Total energy use -- down 21.8%

The dramatic improvements in dry mill ethanol production demonstrate this industry's commitment to developing and utilizing the most efficient technologies available, said Renewable Fuels Association President Bob Dinneen. In the past five years, America's ethanol industry has shown its ability to increasingly meet the fuel needs of the nation while addressing the climate change concerns of the planet. In the next five years, America's ethanol producers will demonstrate their ability to develop and employ new technologies that further reduce greenhouse gas emissions, grow our nation's supply of renewable fuel, and expand the basket of products from which ethanol is made. The future of this industry is bright and green.

The increased use of ethanol is also helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions resulting from Americas automobile fleet, says RFA. According to the GREET 1.7 model (the Greenhouse Gases, Regulated Emissions, and Energy Use in Transportation model developed by the Argonne Laboratory to evaluate various vehicle and fuel combinations on a full fuel-cycle basis), the production and use of 6.5 billion gallons of ethanol in 2007 resulted in the reduction of carbon dioxide and greenhouse gas emissions by 10 million tons, the equivalent of removing more than 1.5 million cars from American roads.

The Argonne analysis also found two key trends that making ethanol more efficient and environmentally friendly. The analysis noted that:

- Nearly 25% of ethanol producers today are capturing their carbon dioxide emissions for use in dry ice production and carbonated beverage bottling.
- 37% of distillers grains, the high protein livestock feed co-product of ethanol production, are now sold in the wet form, reducing the energy needed to dry and transport the product.

RFA says the improvements being made in ethanol production today signal the greener direction in which this industry is moving. The development and implementation of new technologies that improve efficiencies and expand the basket of feedstocks available for ethanol production is occurring rapidly, as the Argonne analysis indicates.

