

Mexico – Future Bio-Fuel Energy Leader

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Agave Future Fuel Alternative

MEXICO CITY - The plant used to make tequila may be the bio-fuel of the future for Mexico, claim experts.

The agave plant could be grown on almost 80 million acres of land in Mexico and that land could produce annually 5,600 million tons of biomass for alternative fuel. That much fuel capacity could satisfy the annual transportation fuel needs of the US.

Per a recent feature article by Global Change Biology Bioenergy, this plant is extremely tolerant of temperature, survives on minimal irrigation and can withstand increases in carbon dioxide and can still produce high yields of plant material for bio-fuel needs.

There are 200 varieties of agave plants and with 20% of the earth being arid the plant could be a natural fit for cultivating a fuel alternative.

Australia has already started actual field plantings to test the viability of this plant source. In Africa there are many plantations that once grew agave for sisal fiber that have been abandoned that could be placed into full production with minimal financial and environmental costs impacts.

Two agave species, agave salmiana and agave mapisaga, have been tested to deliver yields of alternative fuel product that are much greater than the yield from corn, soybean sorghum or wheat. Some of the initial tests resulted in high yields with minimal irrigation.

Some of the species that are used for the production of tequila and fiber only use 20% of the plant product and thus 80% is currently discarded. The discarded by product from an existing business product could be used for a fuel alternative without planting additional plants. There are types of plants being considered for major plantings such as jatropha and sugarcane that will still need to be planted for future production of alternative fuel.