

Biodiesel

Palm oil's popularity recently soared when scientists discovered its capacity to produce an excellent biodiesel – an alternative or additive to standard diesel fuel made from biological ingredients instead of petroleum. Biodiesel can propel a vehicle with significantly lower carbon dioxide emissions than traditional diesel, **WHICH MEANS IT WILL CONTRIBUTE LESS TO GLOBAL WARMING.**

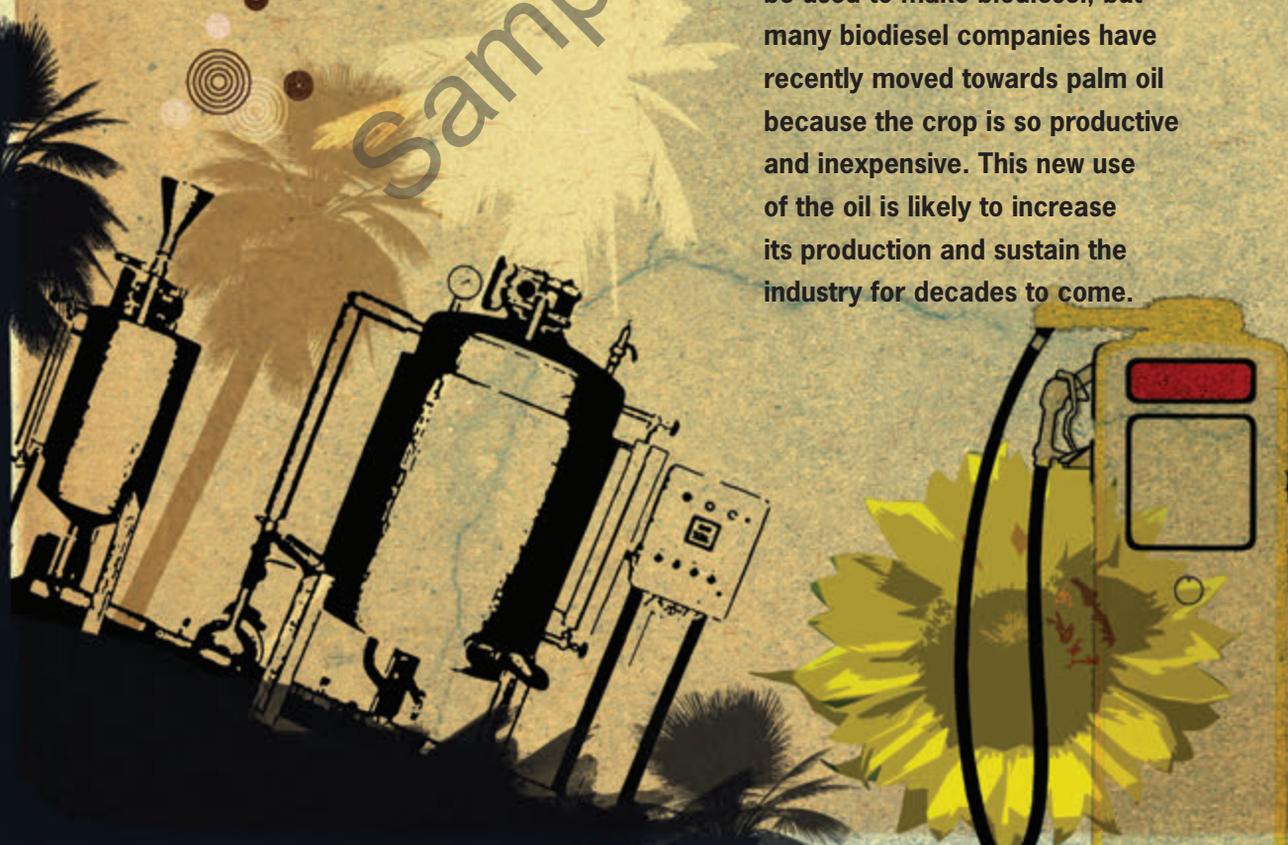
SUPPOSITION

A supposition is an idea or opinion that is formed on the basis of limited evidence, rather than real proof.

Can you find any examples?

Biodiesel, however, is not simply pure vegetable oil. The raw oil must undergo a series of chemical reactions in order to become a fuel.

Several different oils, including sunflower and soybean oil, can be used to make biodiesel, but many biodiesel companies have recently moved towards palm oil because the crop is so productive and inexpensive. This new use of the oil is likely to increase its production and sustain the industry for decades to come.



BEYOND THE TEXT

How can people balance the provision of jobs for people in the palm oil industry against the protection of rainforests?



As climate change warnings grow more urgent and people become more aware of their ecological footprint, or their individual impacts on the Earth, the demand for non-polluting cars has grown from a whisper to a shout. In 2007 an announcement at the European Union (EU) summit sent that demand

even higher. It stated that, by the year 2020, biofuels (an umbrella term for all fuels made from biological sources, including biodiesel) should constitute at least 10 per cent of transport fuels in the EU. And the demand for biofuels is not limited to the Western world. China expects that biofuels will make up 15 per cent of its transport fuel demand by 2020. India predicts 20 per cent by 2012.

QUESTION

If the demand for palm oil is expected to double by 2030, what implications does this have for the destruction of rainforests in South-east Asia?

CLARIFY

carbon dioxide emissions

chemical reactions

ecological footprint

If the biodiesel trend continues, global demand for palm oil is likely to double by the year 2030 and triple by 2050. That's great news for the economies of Malaysia and Indonesia, which together produce 83 per cent of the world's palm oil. It is also great news for the hundreds of thousands of workers employed by plantations. The future for palm oil, they say, looks bright.