LEE ENTERPRISES

1503 East Kiehl Ave • Sherwood, AR 72120 Phone: (501) 833-8511 • Fax: (501) 835-6081
Website: www.lee-enterprises.com Email: wlee52@lee-enterprises.com

STEPS TO A SUCESSFUL BIODIESEL PROJECT

As a biodiesel consultant, I have seen both successful and unsuccessful biodiesel projects. The unsuccessful projects are almost always as a result of an inexperienced team, a failure to properly plan the project, or the use of some unproven, speculative technology that later does not live up to its hype. The successful projects have common elements also. They are always well planned, involve an experienced biodiesel team, and utilize proven, tested technology. As you embark on building a biodiesel plant, what does this mean for you?

Assemble your team as early as possible in the project. Begin with an experienced project consultant who will help you assessing your market and the feasibility of your proposed project and who can later assist you with the oversight and management of the project and protect you from making costly mistakes along the way. If you have not done a feasibility study, do one. If you don't have a business plan, get one. If you have done your own feasibility analysis, have an experienced person review it for you.

Your design and engineering group should be reputable and specifically experienced in biodiesel. You will want to use technology that is proven and has a good safety track record. When you are ready to build, select a fabrication group with experience in building biodiesel plants. They should have clients you can speak with and plants you can tour. They should be able to build and install your processing equipment, and should be able to secure all the ancillary items that will go with your project. You will this group to also include experience in plant startup and employee training, including safety training, and one that can provide ongoing support after your plant is up and running.

The technology you select should be tested and proven, and comply with applicable safety standards (UL/ATEX). You will most likely want a processor that can handle multiple feedstocks simultaneously and can blend feedstocks. You will want a highly automated plant to insure a steady production of "spec" fuel. You will probably want a continuous flow system rather than a batch system, and your facility should include the ability to analyze the final product on site. To help alleviate environmental concerns, you will likely want a waterless technology. Finally, since shutdowns are costly, your technology provider should have the ability to remotely monitor and troubleshoot, eliminating the necessity to shut down your plant and fly in a technician every time you have a problem or question.

The common denominators here are simple. The key to the success of any project is to use experienced professionals and to get them involved in your project early. Many people try to go it alone initially to save money. It always ends up costly. Your project consultant is your starting point. He or she is going to be your "right hand" throughout your project. Get one you trust early on and follow their advice!