Beyond 2030 Technologies and Scale-Up Approaches for SAF Production at NREL

Zia Abdullah
Laboratory Program Manager

CAAFI Biennial General Meeting, June 3, 2022
NREL’s Bioenergy SAF Program Is Broadly Based and Spans Technology Development From Discovery to Large Pilot Scale

**Broad Variety of Feedstock Necessary to Achieve SAF Production of 35 BGY**

Feedstock Production

- Lignocellulosic Biomass (Wood, MSW, agri-waste, grasses, etc.)
- Energy crops, ag residues, Stover, bagasse
- Sugar/Starch Crops (corn, sugarcane etc.)
- Oils, FOG, Algae lipids, Volatile Fatty Acids from wet waste
- CO₂ (point source & DAC), Waste gas, e-

**Selected ‘Beyond 2030’ Conversion Technologies Under Development at NREL**

- Catalytic Fast Pyrolysis
- Ketonization
- Gasification - C₁ to olefins
- Lignin to SAF
- CO₂ reduction and upgrading to intermediates
- Algae deconstruction to carbohydrates, lipids and proteins
- Low CI Hydrogen production

**Commoditized drop-in for refineries**

**SAF Blend stock**

- Blending

**Product Specifications**
- ASTM D4054
- ASTM D7566 (Jet-A)
Catalytic Fast Pyrolysis Produces Stable Bio-Oil Which Can be Hydrotreated to Produce SAF Blend Stock

NREL, in collaboration with PNNL and INL developed a **catalytic fast pyrolysis technologies for converting non-food biomass and waste solid feedstocks into (SAF) blendstocks** through hydrotreatment of stabilized bio-oil.

- Utilizes woody and low-cost feedstocks (e.g., forest residues)
- Char can sequester carbon for additional credits
- Refinery integration can save $0.30/gal on capital cost, reduce risk, and provide trained workforce
- Provides cycloparaffins and aromatics—complementary to HEFA
- >70% reduction in modeled GHG emissions relative to petroleum-derived fuel

For further information contact:
Josh Schaidle
Joshua.Schaidle@nrel.gov

NREL VFA – SAF Catalytic Process Produces Normal and Iso alkane SAF Blendstocks From Wet Waste

- NREL catalytic technology upgrades neat volatile fatty acids from arrested anaerobic digestors to ketones, which can then be upgraded to SAF
- Approach enables a bolt-on solution for existing anaerobic digestor systems and petroleum refineries
- Technology has been licensed to Alder Fuels

For further information contact:
Jacob Miller
jacob.miller@nrel.gov

NREL developed the centerpiece technology for the conversion of renewable C1 intermediates to produce a suite of fuels with improved carbon efficiency, reduced capital expense, and control of the product distribution to SAF.

Developed a mild-condition route for coupling syngas-derived olefins to jet-range hydrocarbons

- \( \text{C}_4-\text{C}_8 \) Branched Olefins → \( \text{C}_8-\text{C}_{20} \) Branched SAF Blend Stock

Product meets 5 key ASTM International jet fuel property specifications:

- Density
- Freeze Point
- Viscosity
- Heating Value
- Boiling Curve

For further information contact:
Dan Ruddy
Dan.Ruddy@nrel.gov
DMR - Lignin Conversion to SAF Blendstocks

- Using lignin waste from deacetylation and mechanical refining (DMR) process (a low temperature atmospheric biomass deconstruction process)
- Producing high energy density dicycloparaffins that could be a potential candidate for high energy fuel additive
- Mimicking the swelling characteristics of aromatics

Wang, Chen, Tucker and Yang et al., Green Chemistry, 2015
Ruan, Heyne, Yang et al., Fuel, 2019
RCF - Lignin Conversion to SAF Blendstocks

- DOE-funded project focused on converting lignin from woody feedstocks, grasses, and agricultural residues to aromatic and cycloalkane blendstocks
- Collaboration with MIT, Argonne National Lab, and University of Dayton Research Institute
- Have demonstrated this work to date on lignin substrates from Reductive Catalytic Fractionation
- Able to achieve >90% mass balance and < 1 wt% oxygen from poplar feedstocks
- Can control selectivity to aromatic or saturated products
- TEA, LCA, and blendstock property testing ongoing

Work funded by DOE BER Center for Bioenergy Innovation and the DOE EERE Bioenergy Technologies Office
NREL’s CAP Process Offers Attractive Economics For SAF Blend Stocks And Non-Isocyanate Polyurethane From Algae

Current olefins from algae 20% jet range, 70% diesel range, catalytically tunable
- $2.50/GGE (with NIPU, no credits)
- $8-10/GGE (no NIPU)
- $5-7/GGE
- D5 RIN credit @ $3/GGE
- LCFS credit: 55% CO₂ reduction (no coproduct)

For further information contact:
Lieve Laurens
Lieve.Laurens@nrel.gov

Energy Fuels 2017, 31, 10, 10946–10953
Technology Summary

• Develop and demonstrate an integrated process that electrochemically generates formate from CO₂ and use the formate as an energy source for the fermentation of sugars to fatty acid methyl esters (FAME) without net CO₂ generation.
• Formate provides reducing equivalents for sugar fermentation.
• Chemical looping reactor system that takes advantage of intermittent low-cost electricity from wind and solar resources.

Technology Impact

• Generation of low cost and low carbon intensity FAME feedstock for generation of renewable diesel and sustainable jet fuel.
• Technology can be applied to use formate as energy source for other fermentations

• CI for the generated FAME of this process is 35 gCO₂e/MJ
• Utilizing enhanced farming technologies would allow the generated FAME to have a CI of 23 gCO₂e/MJ, (similar to tallow feedstocks)

For further information contact:
Randy Cortright
Randy.Cortright@nrel.gov
NREL’s e-M Program is Developing Pathways to Upgrade CO₂ to SAF Blend-stocks Using Renewable Electricity

For further information contact:
Randy Cortright
Randy.Cortright@nrel.gov
e-Methanol to Olefins Pathway Offers a Nearer Term Option to Upgrade CO\textsubscript{2} to SAF Blend Stocks Using Renewable Electricity

For further information contact:
Randy Cortright
Randy.Cortright@nrel.gov
**Refinery Integration:** Refineries Can Be Customers For Biofuels Intermediate Stream Producers

**Opportunities**
- ~6.6M BBPD (97 BGPY) distillate HT capacity available in the United States
- Leveraging this capacity may save capital costs
- May allow incremental transition to renewables by blending renewable and fossil streams
- Opportunities where re-permitting may not be required

**Challenges**
- Large variability of streams
- Match equipment to streams
- Hydrotreater scale too large
- ASTM approval of pathways
- Incompatibility of materials of construction with bio-streams
- Managing exothermic reactions

---

https://www.eia.gov/dnav/pet/PET_PNP_CAP1_A_(NA)_8CDHD0_BPSD_A.htm
Refinery Integration: Refineries Can Be Customers For Biofuels Intermediate Stream Producers

Opportunities
- ~6.6M BBPD (97 BGPY) distillate HT capacity available in the United States
- Leveraging this capacity may save capital costs
- May allow incremental transition to renewables by blending renewable and fossil streams
- Opportunities where re-permitting may not be required

Challenges
- Large variability of streams
- Match equipment to streams
- Hydrotreater scale too large
- ASTM approval of pathways
- Incompatibility of materials of construction with bio-streams
- Managing exothermic reactions

Focus of R&D: Conversion of Intermediates To Meet Critical Material Attributes (CMA)
These are physical and chemical properties of pretreated renewable streams which can be processed by refinery hydrotreaters with no or minor modifications.

https://www.eia.gov/dnav/pet/PET_PNP_CAP1_A_(NA)_8CDHD0_BPSD_A.htm
Thank you

www.nrel.gov

This work was authored by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, operated by Alliance for Sustainable Energy, LLC, for the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) under Contract No. DE-AC36-08GO28308. Funding provided by U.S. Department of Energy Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Bioenergy Technologies Office. The views expressed in the article do not necessarily represent the views of the DOE or the U.S. Government. The U.S. Government retains and the publisher, by accepting the article for publication, acknowledges that the U.S. Government retains a nonexclusive, paid-up, irrevocable, worldwide license to publish or reproduce the published form of this work, or allow others to do so, for U.S. Government purposes.