

Press release

Milestone for sustainable aviation: innovative fuel gains approval

Berlin, June 16th, 2014

As of today, the aviation sector has the opportunity for climate-friendly flights using saccharide-based fuels. The certification body ASTM has approved farnesane, a fuel developed by Amyris, an American start-up company, and TOTAL, after a comprehensive test series for the use in civil aviation.

Siegfried Knecht, Chairman of aireg: „The certification of farnesane is a milestone for the civil aviation sector. The fully-compatible, sustainable fuel brings us further towards achieving our emission reduction targets. Supported by the great interest of numerous airlines from around the world, TOTAL and Amyris have developed this breakthrough technology, which is opening up an array of new feedstocks. aireg will now work with industry, government and research partners to assess options for technology deployment in Germany.”

The process called Direct Sugar to Hydro Carbon (DSHC) uses saccharides (C5- and C6-sugars) originating from different feedstocks for fermentation by yeasts directly creating hydrocarbons. The technology has already reached industrial scale. Farnesene is produced in a facility with an annual capacity of 30 million liters in Brotas, Brazil. This fermentation product is then converted in a standard chemical process into farnesane and can be blended as a biobased jet fuel component up to ten percent with Jet A-1 fuel. Eventually, higher sugars (polysaccharides like e.g. celluloses), which offer even greater environmental and economic potential, may also be used. Amyris and TOTAL will now focus their research accordingly.

With DSHC there are now three conversion technologies available for the production of sustainable alternative fuels. aireg supports the development of further biorefining pathways, of which several might also gain approval in the near future.

About aireg:

Companies and organizations from industry, research and science founded aireg – Aviation Initiative for Renewable Energy in Germany e.V. in 2011. aireg is promoting the development and use of regenerative liquid fuels in order to help achieve the ambitious CO₂ reduction targets of the aviation sector. By 2025, 10% of the German jet fuel demand shall be replaced by sustainable, alternative aviation fuels.

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