

## Portal to trace source of used cooking oil diverted for conversion to biodiesel

[T.V.Jayan](#), New Delhi | December 27, December 27, 2019



In an attempt to give a push to the diversion of used cooking oil (UCO) for making biodiesel, the government has created an online ecosystem, which would make it possible to trace the source of used vegetable oil, used for making biofuel.

The web portal, which will have all the information relating to collection and conversion of UCO for making biodiesel, was unveiled at a workshop organised jointly by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) and the Biodiesel Association of India (BDAI) here on Friday.

Called Repurpose Used Cooking Oil (RUCO), the initiative spearheaded by FSSAI, attempts to address two major issues. Apart from helping save a part of the forex outflow for crude oil imports, the diversion of used edible oil helps fight adulteration in the edible oil industry and also the adverse health effects associated with reuse of oil for repeated frying.

During frying, several properties of oil get altered, For instance, toxic total polar compounds, which are linked to several diseases such as hypertension, atherosclerosis, Alzheimer's disease and liver diseases are formed on repeated frying. Therefore, it is essential to monitor the quality of vegetable oils used for frying.

## RUCO initiative

On August 10 this year, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, under which FSSAI operates, and the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas came together to launch the RUCO initiative. Subsequently, the Oil Marketing Companies invited expressions of interest (EOIs) for supplying biodiesel produced from UCO from different States. According to the latest count, as many as 200 EOIs have been received.

The government has also announced attractive prices to encourage people to divert UCO for biodiesel manufacture. The ex-factory price of UCO-based biodiesel has been fixed for the next three years. The price of biodiesel from used cooking oil would be Rs 51 per litre (August 2019 to September 2020), while the price in the second year (October 2020 to September 2021) would be Rs 52.7 per litre and Rs 54.5 per litre in the third.

According to Sandeep Chaturwedi, BDAI President, of the 2,467 crore litres of edible oil consumed annually in the country, nearly two-thirds is used by households and food business operators (FBOs) and one-third by soaps and oleochemical manufacturers. The total amount of UCO generated by FBOs in India is estimated at 11.45 lakh tonnes, he said.

Currently, 11 biodiesel plants that can produce biodiesel from UCO operational in India and many more are expected to come up in the near future.

Besides, the FSSAI is using big data to analyse the total purchase of vegetable oils by FBOs so that it can come up with standard oil consumption norms for cuisines. This can help the authorities estimate UCO production in each district in the country, Chaturwedi said.

"The biggest advantage of having a system in place for traceability is that the enforcing agencies would be able to find out how much UCO is generated by the restaurants and other food operators and how much is being released for repurposing as biodiesel," he said.

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