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**SECTION:** Business News

**HEADLINE:** SUV will leave Toledo factory with fuel that contains soybeans

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**DATELINE:** ST. LOUIS

DaimlerChrysler showed off the nation's first mid-sized sport utility vehicle capable of running on fuel that contains soybeans at a **biodiesel** gathering on Wednesday.

When the first Jeep Liberty Common Rail Diesels leave the assembly line in Toledo, Ohio, later this month, the vehicles will be fueled with B5 diesel, a fuel that contains 5 percent **biodiesel** made from U.S.-grown soybeans, the auto manufacturer said.

From there, drivers can use standard diesel fuel or the B5 blend, which many American soybean farmers are trying to make available at the pump.

**Biodiesel** is a renewable alternative fuel made from soybeans or other natural fats or oils. It can be mixed with petroleum diesel to create a **biodiesel** blend that burns more cleanly.

Fifth-generation farmer Bob Metz, president of the National **Biodiesel** Board, called the new vehicle a "bold statement" by DaimlerChrysler at the board's annual meeting in St. Louis.

"They've realized we must lessen our dependence on foreign oil and turn to renewable resources right here in the United States," he said.

The **biodiesel** board said if every diesel vehicle on the road used B5 **biodiesel**, the United States would displace the equivalent of 1.7 billion gallons of foreign oil.

The board is working to increase production and distribution of the fuels containing soybeans. Currently, **biodiesel** is offered at about 300 retail filling stations, and 1,000 distributors carry it nationwide.

The SUVs also will become more widely available. The diesel engines will appear at some dealerships this year, with more on the market by about March of next year, said DaimlerChrysler spokesman Max Gates.

Officials with Germany-based DaimlerChrysler billed the vehicles as providing better fuel economy, a longer lasting engine and lower carbon dioxide emissions than gasoline engines. "These are not the diesel engines of 25 years ago," said Loren Beard, DaimlerChrysler's senior manager for energy programs.

But the diesel-engine SUVs will cost more, with the Liberty Sport CRD 4x4 selling at \$25,125, about \$2,000 more than its gasoline-engine counterpart, the company said.

And diesel engines have environmental drawbacks. Brett Smith with the Center for Automotive Research in Ann Arbor, Mich., said many environmentalists have concerns with diesel engines, because of the amount of particulate matter pollution and nitrous oxides they emit.

"Diesel is a small part of the market, and **biodiesel** is a niche of a niche market," he said. "**Biodiesel** is not the solution, but it is one part to create a cleaner environment."

Beard said the company is looking into several alternatives for fueling its vehicles - not just **biodiesel**, but gas and electric hybrid engines, the development of new fuel cells, and a system already in some vehicles that turns off some cylinders when they're not needed.

He said reduction in the use of petroleum will likely come by cutting "2 percent here or 5 percent there."

"We see this as a big puzzle with lots of pieces," Beard said.

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On the Net:

National **Biodiesel** Board: [www.biodiesel.org](http://www.biodiesel.org)

DaimlerChrysler Jeep: [www.jeep.com](http://www.jeep.com)