

'Industrial' corn: GM variety makes ethanol more energy efficient

Farmers in [North Dakota] will grow an industrial-quality corn specifically designed for the ethanol industry this summer. Corn with the Enogen technology is genetically modified to produce the alpha amylase enzyme that improves efficiency in corn-based ethanol plants, said Marcos Castro, Enogen market manager for Syngenta. "The grower becomes the enzyme provider for the ethanol plant," he said. "Enogen corn contains more alpha amylase than any other corn. The (ethanol) plant does not have to add any enzymes. It makes the corn mash more liquid, and it saves energy."

Converting corn into ethanol is a two-stage process. Enzymes are used to convert the starch in the corn into sugar. Yeast then converts the sugar into alcohol.

Previously, enzymes were added to the mix at the ethanol plant, said Phil Coffin, vice president, commodities and marketing, for Midwest AgEnergy....

Those enzymes can now be bought from local farmers who grow the Enogen corn, he said.

"We'll pay a 40-cent-a-bushel premium to grow this," he said. "That brings some of the benefits back to the farmers."

Castro agreed Enogen would increase local farm revenues.

"It shifts the value of the enzyme from a chemical company to the grower," he said.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: BETTER CORN: Enogen technology increases ethanol production efficiency