New Zealand and Chinese Venture Launches Ethanol Production Plant

Monday, March 28, 2011

http://www.asianscientist.com/tech-pharma/new-zealand-chinese-launches-bioenergy-plant-produces-ethanol/

AsianScientist (Mar. 28, 2011) - New Zealand clean technology company LanzaTech, China's largest steel and iron conglomerate Baosteel Group Corporation, and the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) have launched the construction of a 100,000 demo plant to produce fuel ethanol.

The plant will use LanzaTech's gas fermentation technology for the production of fuel ethanol from steel mill off-gases, with the intention of quickly scaling the model for the first commercial plant in China. An associated research and development center will assist with technology improvements.

Consultant to LanzaTech and former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Chairman Vinod Khosla, and CEO Dr. Jennifer Holmgren joined the President of Baosteel Group Mr He Wenbo, and the President of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Dr Bai Chunli at the Shanghai launch ceremony.

The three-way venture will form a new company, the Shanghai Baosteel LanzaTech New Energy Company Ltd (??????????????). Any technology developed there will then be commercialized with the help of CAS.

CAS President Dr. Bai Chunli considers the demo plant a trailblazer in the field of bioenergy, and also a test of international collaboration in the CAS "Biotechnology Innovation and Bio-industry Promoting Program".

This is a sign that China is committed to reducing its carbon footprint and its need for imported fuel, while continuing to increase its industrial output, says Dr. Holmgren.

> "When our commercial plants, each potentially capable of producing 50 million gallons of ethanol a year, are built throughout China we believe our technology will make a sustainable contribution to meeting China's renewable energy demands," she says.

LanzaTech was founded in early 2005 in Auckland, New Zealand to develop and commercialize a proprietary gas fermentation process that produces ethanol and high-value chemicals from renewable, non-food resources including industrial flue gases and other waste gases. Lanzatech's patented microbe uses these waste gases as its sole source of energy and carbon, in contrast to technologies that require the use of food or farmed resources for renewable fuel production.

Construction of the plant is expected to take six months and production will begin late in the third quarter of this year.

Source: Baosteel Co. Ltd.
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