

US company turns plastic waste into oil

OREGON-BASED Agri-Plas has managed to successfully convert discarded agricultural plastic into crude oil.

The company recently delivered its first full tanker (8,200 gallons) of oil to a Washington state refinery for further processing.



"This technology allows us to continually reuse petroleum-based products over and over again," Jongsma, owner and founder of Agri-Plas told *The News*. "By our estimates, the United States could realise a 20 per cent reduction in crude oil demand if all domestic agricultural plastics were recycled through this process. That figure could dramatically increase if recycling programmes expanded beyond agricultural plastics to, for example, curbside plastics."

According to Jongsma, the company collects unwanted plastic that "chokes landfills or is abandoned, burned or buried" and converts it back into synthetic crude oil. Plastic products reportedly include agricultural film, greenhouse covers, mixed nursery material, prepackaged food containers as well as other low- or zero-value plastics.

Agri-Plas currently operates one plastic-to-oil conversion unit. However, future plans envision construction of five, four-unit Plas2Fuel reclamation systems capable of producing a tanker full of oil per day.

The synthetic crude oil that Agri-Plas has reclaimed from unwanted plastic can be refined for various uses, including makeup, gasoline, diesel, lubricants and other petroleum-based products.

"The fact that Agri-Plas has been able to take plastic that would otherwise go directly into the stream and convert it into a commercial product that can eventually be pumped into a gas tank is groundbreaking," explained Tim McCabe, director of the Oregon Economic & Community Development Department.