
Conference Board of Canada
Ethanol's Potential Contribution to Canada's Transportation Sector
Summary and Key Points

The Conference Board of Canada recently released a report entitled "Ethanol's Potential Contribution to Canada's Transportation Sector."¹ The Conference Board is an independent, non-profit, non-partisan, applied research organization in Canada. The goal of the study was to assess current literature regarding ethanol's energy efficiency, as well as economic and environmental impacts. Overall, the report does an excellent job of highlighting and summarizing the most recent and scientifically robust studies available (including several studies sponsored in whole, or in part, by RFA). The following findings are among the Conference Board report's key conclusions:

- "Ethanol is a clean transportation fuel that has a positive energy balance, reduces GHG emissions, and contributes to energy self-sufficiency."
- "Ethanol reduces GHG emissions relative to gasoline by between 40 and 62 per cent, depending on agricultural practices and production technologies."
- "Ethanol production impacts on water and land are relatively modest and occur primarily because of feedstock production (i.e., growing the crop)."
- "Recent studies conclude that U.S. ethanol contains up to 2.23 times the energy required to produce it."
- "The energy out:energy in ratio will increase further as corn yields and ethanol plant technologies continue to improve."
- "As ethanol plants become more complex biorefineries, they are also becoming more reliant on renewable sources of input energy, and less reliant on hydrocarbons and purchased electricity."
- "Ethanol production has increased rapidly since 2004 in both Canada and the United States. This increasing demand for feedstock has been met through surplus and higher yields, not new farmland."
- "Corn is the primary ethanol feedstock in the U.S., with corn and wheat used in Canada. Crop data do not show evidence of land use changes in either nation as a result of ethanol production."
- "Studies that have examined both the impact of crude oil prices and biofuels demand on agricultural prices conclude that oil prices are the more influential factor."

¹ Available for download at: <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/documents.aspx?did=4511>