



## **“American Consumers Deserve Fuel Choice”**

*By Lars Herseth, President, American Coalition for Ethanol – April 2010*

As a farmer, rancher, businessman, former lawmaker, and current president of the American Coalition for Ethanol, it won't surprise you that I support making renewable and homegrown fuels more widely available. But just like you, I am also a consumer.

I believe that American motorists should have lots of choices at the pump – including fuel not blended with ethanol.

You may have read that statement twice, knowing that I am the president of ACE, a grassroots advocacy association for ethanol. But ACE members believe that motorists deserve the right to choose what fuel to put in their cars, and we're not afraid to have our fuel of choice – ethanol – compete with petroleum. When consumers are given meaningful choices at the pump, we are confident they will choose ethanol.

Today, ethanol-blended fuel is the most affordable and clean-burning alternative to gasoline. And more importantly, unlike some other promising alternative fuels, we don't have to wait for ethanol because it is here now as the only commercially viable substitute for fossil fuels.

ACE has partnered with others to support a waiver pending before the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to allow up to 15 percent ethanol per gallon of gasoline. We have done so because today EPA arbitrarily restricts the volume of ethanol that can be blended into a gallon of gasoline to just 10 percent, and because our competitors work hard to block ethanol from gaining additional market access.

If EPA approves E15, consumers would pay less for fuel because wholesale prices for ethanol are currently at a significant discount to gasoline – in some places a dollar less per gallon. Unfortunately, it is becoming increasingly clear that when EPA does approve E15 it will be on a limited basis, restricting its use to only model year 2001 and newer cars. We are concerned this will cause unnecessary confusion for consumers and may even prevent station owners from choosing to offer the fuel.

So, in anticipation of an inadequate EPA decision on E15, ACE believes the focus should be on consumer fuel choice. The power of fuel choice needs to be transferred from Big Oil back to the consumer, and the most straightforward way to do so is the combination of Flexible Fuel Vehicles (FFVs) and blender pumps.

If every automobile sold in the U.S. were an FFV, which is capable of using virtually any blend of ethanol and gasoline, we know ethanol will compete at the pump. Similarly, blender pumps, which dispense ethanol-gasoline blends at various percentages at the retail level, empower consumers to choose the most affordable and reliable blend of fuel for their car.

To this end, ACE supports S. 1627, the “Consumer Fuels and Vehicle Choice Act,” legislation by Senators Tom Harkin and Richard Lugar to provide more FFVs and blender pumps. ACE has launched an online petition at [www.ethanol.org/petition](http://www.ethanol.org/petition), giving consumers a chance to express their support for this bill and for freedom of fuel choice at the pump. I encourage you to sign the fuel choice petition today.

The longer we wait to provide Americans with real fuel choice, the more consumers will pay at the pump, the more the environment will suffer, and the more our nation will rely on foreign sources of oil. Please make your voice heard at [www.ethanol.org/petition](http://www.ethanol.org/petition).