MissouriCorn

E15 in Missouri: One of the most tested fuels in history, E15 is a blend of 15 percent ethanol and 85 percent gasoline. The use of E15 in 2001 and newer vehicles was approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and finalized in June 2012. As the new fuel is poised to enter the marketplace in Missouri, below are answers to common questions.

Q: Can I use E15 in my vehicle?

A: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has approved E15 as a blend choice for cars and light-duty trucks in model year 2001 and newer. It is an option, not a mandate. A rule change in Missouri does not force retailers to sell E15 or consumers to buy it. This rule allows marketers and consumers an additional fuel choice. Other fuel options, such as E20, E30, E40, E50 and E85 are already sold to flexible fuel vehicles in Missouri, increasing the ethanol supply in the fuel market and consumer choice at the pump.

Q: Why did EPA limit the use of E15 to 2001 and newer model years?

A. EPA chose not to extend the permitted use of E15 to 2000 model year and older vehicles due to the fact that controlled tests cannot be performed on such old vehicles considering the various mileage levels, types of use, state of repair and other variables that would render test results inconclusive.

Q: Won't adding a new fuel be confusing for drivers?

A. The EPA has instructed fuel retailers on how to properly label pumps to clearly convey approved vehicles. We believe consumers are capable of reading pump labels and making an educated decision. Gasoline pumps today already contain numerous labels to guide the consumer's purchase. Diesel fuel is a prime example. Consumers are accustomed and able to make educated choices at the pump. Following guidelines set by the EPA, consumers across the United States have already driven an estimated 44 million miles on E15 without any reported engine or performance issues.

Q: Can I use it in my motorcycle/boat/lawn mower?

A: The rule change only permits the use of E15 in 2001 and newer passenger vehicles. The use of E15 is not approved in motorcycles, boats, lawnmowers and older vehicles. Unlike newer model vehicles, small engines do not have the sophisticated computer controls to adjust for fuel variations. There is also a much broader range of applications, duty cycles, engine types, engine sizes, and cooling technology that would have to be taken into account. This makes it very difficult to test for all scenarios that could be experienced.

Q: Will E15 void car warranties?

A: First, E15 wasn't approved by EPA when many vehicle owner's manuals were written. There has been significant growth in the inclusion of E15 in new vehicles owner manuals since EPA's approval in 2011; especially for brand new cars and trucks sold in 2012 and 2013. Second, just like aftermarket fuel additives, such as stabilizers and octane boosters, or the economy grade 85 octane gasoline that is offered in mountain areas, specific fuels or additives are not always called out by name in a vehicle's owner manual. Use of these non-mentioned fuels and fuel additives does not necessarily void a vehicle warranty. In fact, vehicle manufacturers may not deny a warranty claim based on use of a different fuel if that fuel did not contribute to the problem for which the warranty claim is made.

Q: Why does AAA oppose E15?

A: For AAA to have taken a stance opposing E15, they first had to ignore the 86-car test conducted by the U.S. Department of Energy showing no mechanical problems for both E15 and E20 blends. Instead, their flawed stance was based solely on an 8-car study funded by the American Petroleum Institute (API) designed to fail so it could be used to lobby against ethanol. The South Dakota chapter of AAA was quick to publicly criticize API's advertisements and issued a statement supportive of ethanol and consumer choice. After which, the national AAA office made a public statement claiming API used their name without permission.

Q: How will this impact mileage?

A: There is a loss of less than 2 percent in mileage for E15 when compared to other gasoline blends in the market. For a vehicle getting 30 mpg, this would equate to a drop to around 29.4 mpg. Consumers are the harshest critics when comparing the cost per mile. If they believe E15 offers them a more economical choice at the pump they will use the product. It's all about choice.

Q: How expensive is it for fuel retailers to add E15?

A: A recent report from the Petroleum Equipment Institute found the cost for retailers to offer 15 percent ethanol blends can be as little as $50 for labels to a maximum of approximately $15,000.

MISSOURI CORN GROWERS ASSOCIATION | MISSOURI CORN MERCHANDISING COUNCIL
3118 EMERALD LANE, JEFFERSON CITY, MO 65109 | (800) 827-4181 | www.mocorn.org