E15 and the Motorcycle Industry

Q. What is the concern with E15 and the motorcycle industry?

A. E15 (15% ethanol, 85% gasoline) was approved by the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for use in light duty vehicles (cars, trucks, and SUVs) made in model year 2001 and newer, as well as all flex-fuel vehicles (FFVs). E15 was not approved for small engines, lawn mowers and motorcycles; in fact its use in these types of engines is illegal. That being said, E10 (10% ethanol, 90% gasoline) continues to be a safe and approved fuel for motorcycle engines. Even though the commercialization of E15 is going quite slow, with only a handful of stations offering the fuel today, the American Motorcyclist Association (AMA) has expressed concern that the introduction of E15 will eliminate the availability of E10 in the marketplace for motorcycles. AMA’s concern was exacerbated by EPA’s decision to require a 4-gallon minimum purchase where E15 was being dispensed from a common hose with other E10 fuels. EPA imposed this requirement to address concerns that residual fuel from an E15 sale would result in greater than E10 being dispensed to consumers not able to use E15. Many motorcycles have tanks less than 4-gallons.

Q. E15 is illegal to use in motorcycle engines, what about E10?

A. E10 has been approved for use in motorcycle engines. For decades, E10 has been used by motorcyclists as a safe and cost saving alternative to pure gasoline.

Q. What is being done to assist the motorcycle industry with concerns about E15?

A. RFA worked with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to address the AMA concern. In February, 2013, EPA approved an option promoted by the RFA that obviates the need for a 4-gallon minimum sale and assures the availability of E10 fuels for those engines that can’t utilize the higher blend. The new configuration requires retailers to have at least one fueling position without E15; and to clearly identify this fueling position for those with small engines, lawn mowers and motorcycles. All other fueling positions will have labeling identifying those fueling positions as “for passenger vehicles only”, and provide guidance to the non-E15 position.

Q. How will consumers identify the appropriate fuel for their vehicle/engine?

A. EPA has required an orange and black E15 label that clearly identified what vehicles can and cannot use E15. Additionally, RFA has built an extensive misfueling mitigation plan that all retailers offering E15 must follow to ensure consumer education and recognition. For more details, the plan developed by the Renewable Fuels Association, can be downloaded here. Additionally, the RFA is offering the labels, signage, educational classes, fuel dispenser marketing tools, and an E15 Retailer Handbook to all retailers—all at no cost! The Handbook can be downloaded here.
Important Information on E15:

FACT: E15, a fuel blend of 15% ethanol/85% gasoline, is the next step in America’s quest for real choice at the pump.

FACT: E15 has been approved by the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for use in light duty vehicles (cars, trucks, and SUVs) made in model year 2001 and newer, as well as all flex-fuel vehicles (FFVs). This represents more than 80% of the nation’s vehicle fleet and nearly 85% of all miles driven. Remember, E15 is not a mandate. It simply gives fuel suppliers the option of blending up to 15% ethanol per gallon for sale to the EPA-approved vehicle population.

FACT: E15 has become the most tested fuel additive in EPA’s approval history! In the 6.5 million miles of testing, the Department of Energy found no problems with the use of E15 in the numerous vehicles selected. Additionally, consumers have driven more than 200 million miles without any real issues. For more than three decades, ethanol has been a safe and effective fuel additive in our nation’s fuel supply. The same is true for E15 and those vehicles identified.

2016 United States ethanol industry at a glance:

- 214 ethanol biorefineries
- 14.8 billion gallons of annual production
- 85,967 jobs directly associated with ethanol production
- $44 billion contribution to GDP; $24 billion in household income
- There are more than 20 million flex-fuel vehicles
- Over 3,400 stations offer ethanol blends above 10%

More information on E15 can be found at www.ChooseEthanol.com/E15.