

Bowyer champions the increased use of ethanol in gasoline

By **RANDY COVITZ** - The Kansas City Star

NASCAR's Clint Bowyer feels your pain at the gas pump, too.

With gas prices nearing \$4 a gallon, it gets expensive even for Sprint Cup drivers to fill their tanks, and Bowyer, hopes to champion the use of ethanol-blended fuel during the STP 400 on Sunday at Kansas Speedway.

This year, for the first time, all three of NASCAR's top three series — Sprint Cup, Nationwide and Camping World Trucks — are running Sunoco Green E-15 fuel, a cleaner and green alternative fuel component.

Bowyer of Emporia will carry the black, silver and green colors of American Ethanol on his No. 33 Chevrolet this weekend; and the wall at Kansas Speedway has been painted green between turns two and three for the weekend races to draw attention to the use of ethanol, which is produced by corn farmers in the Midwest. In fact, about 1,100 corn farmers will be at Kansas Speedway to support Bowyer.



Gerry Broome

Clint Bowyer of Emporia says that Midwestern grown corn can help create independence from foreign oil.

"I don't know if you've seen the price of fuel lately, but this whole country needs to be paying attention to this ethanol thing, because it's a good way to create independence from foreign oil," Bowyer said.

"It's been a very good partnership, not only with myself, but with the sport of NASCAR. It's been great so far, seeing horsepower increase with little or no effect to the race cars at all."

Ethanol is the most commercially viable alternative that America currently has to offset the economic impact of foreign petroleum. Corn ethanol reduces emissions by 59 percent, and cellulosic ethanol is at least 86 percent cleaner. By strengthening America's energy independence, ethanol helps create American jobs. Studies have shown that for every \$1 sent overseas for oil, \$1.55 leaves the U.S. economy.

"The ethanol is cutting emissions more than 50 percent already in these cars," Bowyer said, "and if you imagine if every car in America had that, not only could we control fuel prices, but we can control the emissions we're putting in the atmosphere."

"Born and raised in the Midwest ... that's right in heart of where this corn is grown, so it's only fitting we're doing this at Kansas Speedway."

E-15 is not available at the corner gas station, but many pumps have up to 10 percent ethanol, said Mike Lynch, managing director of green innovation for NASCAR, and there's a movement to increase that limit to 15 percent in your car.

"This is to raise awareness and provide a platform for fact-based dialogue around American Ethanol," Lynch said of Bowyer's relationship with the corn growers. "With Clint and the others driving E-15 on the track every week and finding their getting a bit more horsepower, the car's riding great. ... If it's good enough for NASCAR, maybe it's good enough for the fans in their cars on the street."

Lynch said consumers who want to try E-15 need to contact their congressmen or senators and gas retailers.

A win on Sunday by Bowyer at his home track would help the cause, too.

"That would be big," he said. "We've gotten close, including that (second-place) to (Greg) Biffle in 2007. We ran well the first couple races there, but we've struggled here as of late. It's an important track for me and it would be a hell of a party, I can promise you that."

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