

Discussion of “Feasibility of Corn and Ethanol from a Land Use Perspective” by Andrew Allaby

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- Cites how improvements in ethanol technology may increase ethanol yield per bushel of corn.
 - High starch variants of corn. Makes bad food, good ethanol output.
 - Distilling technology.
- Primary focus: increase in land dedicated to corn.
 - Acres currently used for competing crops.
 - Discusses yield drops.
 - Acres currently under Conservation Reserve Program.

- Linear upward trend corn crop yield may not be appropriate for 2016 forecast.
 - It has been nearly linear since 1940.
 - Last 30 years has seen increased volatility.
 - Crops dedicated to ethanol use different variety of corn.
- Linear upward trend in ethanol yield not likely.
 - Pimental (1998), Graboski (2001): very different estimates for net energy balance.
 - High demand for ethanol, high corn prices, should induce R&D.

- Assumes the price of corn will remain constant.
 - Federal programs may encourage ethanol usage.
- Lacking economic explanations:
 - Why will the U.S. be demanding 35 billion gallons of ethanol?
 - What economic incentives will Federal programs provide for ethanol usage and/or production?
 - How will consumers and farmers react to these changing incentives?