ETHANOL FUEL AND YOUR EQUIPMENT FLEET
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT HIGHER
U RF AND FIELD MANAGERS must operate and maintain a host of outdoor power and small engine equipment, from mowers and blowers to utility vehicles, generators and trimmers. Along with safety and reliability, managers want equipment to enjoy a long product lifecycle. Through regular maintenance, one expects that equipment lasts long enough to more than payback on the original investment.

However, in the coming year, a new higher ethanol fuel, called Ethanol 15 (E15), will likely appear in gas stations across the country. Although mandated by law, when used in turf and grounds equipment, E15 can cause engine failure and damage product. E15 can cause engine failure and damage product.

WHY HIGHER ETHANOL FUEL?
Energy independence and domestic security gave rise to fuels legislation. Signed into law in 2007, Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) program regulations were developed in collaboration with refiners, renewable fuel producers, and many other stakeholders. Created under the Energy Policy Act (EPAct), EPA was tasked with reaching the RFS requirement of 7.5 billion gallons of renewable-fuel to be blended into gasoline by 2012 and growing to 15 billion gallons of ethanol. As a result, ethanol use has been mandated by law.

The challenge has been that the underlying assumptions used to develop the RFS were not met.

For example, many believed that an E85 auto fleet and E85 infrastructure would expand and gasoline use would continue to climb and that E85 would absorb the mandated ethanol. Yet, E85 demand and availability remains low.

Further assumptions that have fallen short are:
• Flex fuel vehicles that use E85 have not expanded rapidly enough
• E85 use is not expanding
• Gasoline consumption peaked in 2007 and continues to fall, and

• Advanced and cellulosic fuels (non corn ethanol) are not available.

So why are you hearing that there will be 15% ethanol on the market although we know that it can damage outdoor power equipment used by your grounds crews?

THE BACK AND FORTH ON ETHANOL 15
In 2009, Growth Energy, an ethanol industry trade group, petitioned the EPA to raise the limit on ethanol in gasoline from 10 to 15%. Since gas consumption was falling and E85 was not taking hold, they wanted to increase the allowable level of ethanol to create more demand in the marketplace and to meet ever increasing ethanol mandates. Understanding the corrosive effects of higher levels of ethanol, several engine product and auto manufacturers, including the outdoor power equipment, motorcycle and boating industry, urged EPA to be deliberative in its review process, and assure, with thorough
Remember the old saying: “What goes in the car, goes in the gerry can, and then goes in the mower?” Well, with E15, that doesn’t apply any longer to mowers or to any small engine equipment for that matter.

And, the totality of EPA’s education effort on E15 is a “3-by-3-inch” attention label at the gas pump. This will be wholly inadequate to keep not only turf managers, but their crews, from mis-fueling.

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As a result, on December 20, 2010, a newly formed Engine Products Group comprising the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers (Aliance), The Association of International Automobile Manufacturers, Inc. (AIAM), the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA), and the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI) filed a petition challenging the EPA’s decision to grant a partial waiver approving the sale of gasoline containing E15 for 2007 model year and newer passenger cars and light trucks.

In 2012, the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit denied a rehearing on a suit brought forth by the American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers (AFPM) and OPEI stating that neither group could prove they had been “harmed” by EPA’s decision to allow E15 fuel and therefore, didn’t have “standing.”

This ruling alarmed the outdoor power equipment industry since the judges wanted to see personal or economic injury before they could take action, despite the fact that the EPA itself has admitted there will be mis-fueling...
and engine and product failures with E15, and a variety of interests (lawn and garden, auto, power sports, motorcycle and marine equipment) have come out against the use of E15.

Insisting on the right to protect consumers before they get hurt economically or personally, The Engine Products Group filed a petition on March 25, 2013, asking the US Supreme Court to review the DC Circuit Court of Appeals’ August 2012 decision that none of the trade associations or parties had standing in the case. The group is challenging the EPA decision to grant partial waivers approving the sale of gasoline containing E15 for 2001 model year and newer passenger cars and light trucks. The Court of Appeals dismissed the case for lack of jurisdiction in August 2012.

This appeal to the Supreme Court reflects the seriousness of this issue for the outdoor power equipment and small engine industry. We feel strongly that this challenge to the E-15 partial waiver needs to be considered on its merits, and not held back on a procedural issue.

In the meantime, other movements are underway to halt E15 sales.

- AAA’s (Triple A) has called for the sale and use of E15 to be suspended until additional gas pump labeling and consumer education efforts are implemented to mitigate problems for motorists and their vehicles.
- Congressman Jim Sensenbrenner (R-WI) introduced H.R. 875, which would require the EPA to stop the use of gasoline containing 15 percent ethanol until its harmful effects are investigated further.
- The Coordinating Research Council released a January 2013 report outlining fuel test results that show E15 fuel can damage fuel system components.
- OPEI has formed an industry task group to study the best and most effective ways to communicate the challenges and risks associated with using E15 to the public.

**WHAT YOU SHOULD DO RIGHT NOW**

Turf managers should visit www.OPEI.org/ethanolwarning for more information and make sure employees are clear on the dangers of fueling up outdoor power equipment with anything greater than 10 percent ethanol fuel.

Specifically, turf managers should:

- Read and follow the owner’s manual. The owner’s manual will clearly explain what fuels can be used to ensure a properly functioning product.
- Not put any fuel containing more than 10 percent (E10) in small engine products, unless otherwise stated.
- Check the gas pump to be sure that it is dispensing E10. Some gas pumps at local gas stations may offer both E10 and E15, or have blender pumps that dispense mid-level ethanol fuels for “flex-fuel” automobiles. Higher ethanol fuel may be less expensive than regular E10 fuel, but putting E15 into an E10 approved product could cause product failure and void its warranty.
- Not assume that the fuel they put in their vehicle can also be dispensed in their gasoline can. Be sure that the gas can is filled only with E10 fuel.

**Kris Kiser is president and CEO of the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute, an international trade association representing 90 small engine, utility vehicle and outdoor power equipment manufacturers and suppliers of consumer and commercial outdoor power equipment.**

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**Toro Pro Force blowers make debris gone with the wind**

The new Toro Pro Force is the most powerful single nozzle turbine-type debris blower in its class. This air power provides fast removal of grass clippings, leaves, aeration cores, or other unwanted debris from your sports fields, golf course or other maintained turf areas, and hard surface areas such as park trails, parking lots or golf car paths.

*The Toro Company*

**Turf Tidy 3000**

The Turf Tidy 3000 from Redexim North America is one of the most versatile machines built today. It incorporates dethatching, flail mowing, core collection and debris clean up applications into one machine. The Turf Tidy’s fully floating cutting head follows the grounds’ contours, ensuring accurate cutting and pick-up. The unique turbo fan makes a clean sweep of leaves, pine needles, paper, aeration cores and grass clippings. The large hopper means less time emptying and its high lift allows greater clearance when tipping; it will easily dump into a utility vehicle or dumpster. The new Super 600 high dump is a heavy-duty sweeper/verticutter/flail mower collection system by Wiedenmann which is much like the Super 500; however, it has an increased hopper capacity of approximately 80%. The multi-purpose head allows for sweeping, verticutting, and flail mowing while collecting clippings into a 5.9 cubic yard hopper with a high dump reach up to 83”. Another new product to aid in the clean-up process is the Mega Twister blower, which has approximately 14,500 CFMs and can swivels 270⁰ on the ground. A third new product for sweeping artificial turf is the new Terra Clean 100 ground driven sweeper. The rotary brush of the Terra Clean 100 brings debris and some crumb rubber or infill onto a vibrating screen that separates the debris from the crumb rubber. The crumb rubber is redistributed back onto the field. This machine can be used either indoors or outdoors with just about any type of tow vehicle.

*Redexim North America*

*Wiedenmann North America*