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Diligent Tanzania provides technology and helps Tanzanian farmers to be prime supplier in first sustainable biofuel flight

Arusha, Tanzania, 26th November, 2008.

“Diligent Tanzania is proud to support Air New Zealand, Rolls Royce and Boeing, in developing the world’s first environmentally sustainable jet fuel replacement biofuel using our innovative outgrower network of smallholder farmers across Tanzania and Arusha-based biofuel processing unit”, announced Diligent Tanzania General Manager, Ms. Janske van Eijck today. “This is the first large-scale production run of a commercially viable and sustainable biofuel for aviation use” she added.

Diligent Tanzania has been a leading supplier of jatropha-based biofuel for a planned historic test flight by Air New Zealand. The two-hour test flight is scheduled to take off around 0900 on 3 December with jatropha blend fuel used to power one Air New Zealand Boeing 747-400's Rolls-Royce RB211 engines. This marks a key moment in global efforts to further save fuel and reduce aircraft emissions using sustainable sources.

On visiting Diligent Tanzania's biofuel production facility this week Air New Zealand Chief Pilot, Captain David Morgan, welcomed the sustainable approach of sourcing jatropha from Tanzanian smallholders. "Visiting Diligent outgrowers has shown the company's commitment to sustainable jatropha production that benefits local communities, does not compete with existing food stocks and provides a framework for community based biofuel production". Captain Morgan will be on board the world's first flight test on a large passenger aircraft using fuel sourced from jatropha.

The quality of jatropha based jet fuel has been proven in rigorous testing by Rolls-Royce. "We anticipate no problems using jatropha fuel in the test flight, as it has exceeded regular jet fuel in laboratory tests." Captain Morgan explained. "Air New Zealand notes Diligent Tanzania's contribution to our goal of being the world's most environmentally sustainable airline", he added.

“Fulfilling a comprehensive range of environmental and social sustainability criteria were key to Diligent Tanzania being successfully selected to contribute to the historic test flight” explained Ms. van Eijck. “Outgrowers supplying jatropha to Diligent Tanzania have to demonstrate key production criteria for jatropha oil: that land has not been forest in the last two decades. The quality of the soil and climate is such that the land is not suitable for the vast majority of food crops. Furthermore, farms are rain-fed and do not compete with limited water resources” she continued.

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Notes for editors

- Diligent Tanzania Ltd is active in renewable energy services related to the production, promotion and usage of vegetable oil, Jatropha oil. We are producers of Jatropha oil and biodiesel for transportation fuel purposes. Diligent Tanzania Ltd. is continuously researching all aspects related to vegetable oil. Our office is located in Arusha, but our activities stretch to a much larger area of Tanzania and Africa. Diligent Tanzania Ltd. provides farmers with a guaranteed market for their seeds. The seeds are processed into oil, biofuel, which can be used as diesel substitute.
- Using vegetable oil instead of fossil diesel fuel has many advantages. It has an almost closed carbon dioxide cycle, because the CO2 emitted during combustion is first captured by the plant during its growth. This helps to stop the global CO2 concentration rise in the atmosphere, leading to global warming (the so called greenhouse effect). Diligent Tanzania is working together with local farmers in growing Jatropha curcas. One of the fundamentals of Diligent's acquisition is paying a fair price. In this way the profit is double: vegetable oil is not only a renewable, nearly CO2 neutral fuel, also a contribution is made to a fair distribution of prosperity over the world, as Tanzanian farmers can build their future using the revenues from the Jatropha sales.
- The Tanzanian fuel not only met but exceeded three rigorous criteria for the next generation of jet fuel: higher than expected jet fuel yields, very low freeze point and good energy density during rigorous laboratory testing by UK aero engine maker Rolls-Royce. This ensures both compatibility with jet engine components and to validate that it meets stringent performance criteria for aviation fuel. A key requirement was that the Tanzanian jatropha fuel be a 'drop-in' fuel, meaning its properties will be virtually indistinguishable from conventional fuel, Jet A1, used in commercial aviation today.
- Outgrowers working with Diligent Tanzania provided the largest African contribution of the innovative fuel, alongside jatropha seeds provided by farmers in southern Africa and India.
- The Sustainable Aviation Fuel Users Group also requires that jatropha production does not compete with existing food resources and that it should be cost competitive with existing fuel supplies.
- Diligent Tanzania rigorously monitors production of all outgrowers and ensures prices paid to outgrowers reflect market demand for sustainable fuel.
- Diligent Tanzania only promotes jatropha production through intercropping or fencing, therefore not threatening existing food production, competing with limited water resources and providing farmers with additional income.