

27 January 2006

Baroness Shephard breaks ground for UK's first bioethanol factory

Construction has begun on the UK's first bioethanol factory at Wissington Sugar Factory in Norfolk. Baroness Gillian Shephard of Northwold attended a breaking ground ceremony at the British Sugar Wissington site on Friday 27th January and assisted in the initial earthmoving before foundations are laid.

Baroness Shephard said "This is a wonderful day for agriculture, for Norfolk and for our sustainable environment. Thank you to British Sugar, farmers and everyone else who has worked so hard to make this happen. It is a historic day for us all."

Karl Carter, Operations Director, commented "British Sugar are delighted to have taken this important first step in launching the UK bioethanol industry. When our plant is completed we will be the first UK manufacturer of bioethanol and the beginning of construction represents a critical milestone in the development of a UK industry."

Also present for a celebratory lunch and presentations from Baroness Shephard and Mark Carr, British Sugar Chief Executive were Christopher Fraser, MP for South West Norfolk; Paul Burell from the East of England Development Agency and Pamela Forbes, the Regional Director of the NFU.

British Sugar's bioethanol plant will be fully operational by early 2007. Initial groundbreaking and excavation, being carried out by Lancaster Earthmoving, is due to be completed by March 2006 before commencement of the main civils contract. Once operational, the plant will produce 55,000t (or 70 million litres) of bioethanol annually for inclusion in ordinary unleaded petrol. This plant will be the first UK bioethanol plant.

For further information, contact Tony Sidwell, New Opportunities Manager, on 01733 422446 or 07808 787941 or at asidwell@britishsugar.co.uk

Editors notes:

- Bioethanol is a biofuel - or green fuel - that can produce up to 70 per cent fewer carbon emissions than petrol.
- Nearly a quarter of all UK carbon emissions come from road transport and emissions in this sector are still growing.
- If bioethanol replaced 5 per cent of petrol in the UK, it would amount to the equivalent carbon saving of taking one million cars off the road.
- In the UK, bioethanol will be produced from sugar beet or wheat. British Sugar will produce bioethanol from sugar beet at its Wissington plant.
- It is simple to use because it is mixed with petrol in a blend of 5% bioethanol, 95% petrol and dispensed through normal unleaded petrol pumps. Higher percentages of bioethanol can be used in special cars such as the Saab Biopower or the Ford FlexiFuel Vehicle both of which are available in the UK.
- Video footage showing the story of bioethanol is available on request.