Press Release

High FAME blends (B30) in Inland Navigation – It works!

Berlin, 20th March 2025 – The increased use of biodiesel (FAME - fatty acid methyl ester) in those applications where liquid fuels or pure mineral diesel (B0) cannot be replaced in the short term can contribute to achieving climate protection targets. The guideline by AGQM and its partners is intended to provide insights into how inland barges can transition to fuels with a higher proportion of renewable energy.

“Shipping transport accounts for 90% of global trade and is a cornerstone of the global economy, but it’s also increasingly under scrutiny for its environmental impact,” says Katharina Friedrich, Manager of AGQM. “The 2015 Paris Agreement marked a turning point, putting pressure on the shipping industry to contribute to climate protection goals.” The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has responded with the 2023 IMO Strategy on Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships, aiming for a 40% reduction in carbon intensity by 2030, with sustainable fuels like biodiesel playing a key role. Similarly, the European Union's 2023 FuelEU Maritime regulation, part of the Fit for 55 Package, seeks to decarbonize the sector.

To prepare our guide, we collaborated with the Lubricant and Bunker fuels supplier OK Slurink to conduct a real-life operating trial aboard the Pouwel S, a vessel equipped with dual diesel engines. In this trial, the starboard engine operated on conventional B0 diesel fuel, while the portside engine ran on B30 biodiesel, enabling a direct comparison. The results demonstrated that transitioning to B30 is a viable and sustainable option for decarbonizing inland shipping. Key parameters, including fuel quality, viscosity, and sulfur content, remained stable throughout, with no adverse effects on performance or service life. Additionally, the reduction in total base number (TBN) and increase in iron content typically observed in engine oil during operation with B0 were absent in the B30-powered engine, suggesting a potential advantage of B30. This trial underscores the feasibility of B30 as a practical solution for the industry.

“The successful project shows that a switch from B0 to B30 is already possible today and in the existing shipping fleet without major adjustments and that in this way a significant reduction of greenhouse gases in inland shipping is possible,” says Katharina Friedrich, Managing Director of AGQM. “Our guideline also provides a good basis for dialogue with ship operators and manufacturers in order to convince

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them to use a higher proportion of biodiesel in shipping."

Currently, various ship engines are already approved for use with B100 or B20/B30 (diesel fuel with a blend of 20% or 30% FAME) and are listed in a corresponding approval list published by the associations AGQM (Association Quality Management Biodiesel), MVaK (German Waste-based Biofuels Association), UFOP (Union for the Promotion of Oil and Protein Plants) and VDB (Association of the German Biofuel Industry), which is constantly being expanded in consultation with the manufacturers.

The guideline and approval list can be found on the AGQM homepage (https://www.agqm-biodiesel.com/en) under the section R&D.

AGQM is an organization founded by leading companies of the German biodiesel industry. As technical association AGQM predominantly deals with all issues concerning the quality management of biodiesel and its by-products.

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