

National Algae Association Announces Opening of Testing Center

By National Algae Association

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This first-of-its-kind initiative has been on-going as a part of NAA's algae production incubator program to assist new algae start-up companies test commercial photobioreactors, harvestors and extraction systems before entering the algae industry.

The Testing Center is a test-bed for taking algae technologies out of the lab to be confirmed and to see if they have the capability to scale on acreage or in commercial buildings. Many algae technologies will not scale. The Testing Center will independently confirm technologies and prove whether or not they can scale or not. Algae researchers will finally have the opportunity to collaborate with other algae researchers and commercial equipment manufacturers to test their lab-scale technologies in a commercial environment at the NAA Testing Facility.

Data is key to algae production scale-up. The Testing Center tests growth rates, inputs of nutrients and CO₂, along with measuring harvesting and extraction data, while simultaneously measuring dissolved oxygen, pH, conductivity, ORP, salinity and temperature, using full data logging developed for the algae industry.

Potential investors are tired of hearing about what algae might be able to do - they want to see production capabilities, data and turn-key algae production systems all in one place. NAA is able to work with the financial community by providing them what they want to see.

"The Testing Center has been made possible because of the dedication of equipment and material providers who believe that algae can help to reduce US dependence on foreign oil" according to NAA Executive Director Barry Cohen. "This particular initiative shows us what can be done with hard work, collaboration and commitment to scaling up the commercial algae production industry, not government sponsored funding and research. Without Georg Fischer, Harvel, Solar-Components, Bayliff Enterprises, Yokogawa, YSI, Gothic Arch Greenhouses, Algae Technology Ventures, Airgas and Commercial Algae Management, we wouldn't be making this announcement today."

Cohen went on to say, "Based on my experiences with the academic community and with the US Department of Energy, there is not a doubt in my mind why the DoE-funded projects have not led to commercial production in the US! By the time DOE-FOA-0000615 Advancements in Sustainable Algal Production (ASAP) gets funded in August, this initiative will be well under way. Our successes cannot be accomplished by hoping for future grant money and stocking labs with expensive lab equipment with disregard for obligations, commitments and milestones - this is something that's going to take the business community, led by do-ers, not talkers - those whose ulterior motives are genuinely to help reduce our dependence on foreign oil, to become energy independent and create jobs.

NAA has made it this far without the assistance of the DoE or the research community - imagine what it could do with a little support!"

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NAA's mission is to fast track commercialization of algae as an alternative fuel to reduce US dependency on foreign oil and to create jobs in the US by putting algae researchers, algae growers, farmers and producers, and equipment manufacturers together

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