

Obama & Vilsack Will Secure Clean, Green Food & Energy Supplies

An E-Mail to Progressive Activists

December 23, 2008

I just received a couple very interesting articles [copies sent with e-mail] from my cousin Larry, a corn and soybean farmer back in Iowa—the homestate of Obama's pick for Secretary of Agriculture, Ex-Gov. Tom Vilsack. While most of us don't live on farms—we can thank the farmers for feeding us citydwellers so well—agricultural issues today are vital to not only our supplies of food but also to our supplies of energy and, thus, the security of our nation and the health of our planet. Keeping that and some recent controversies in mind, I've excerpted below some very interesting passages.

Here are few quick facts that are important to know:

- Biofuels include both "corn ethanol" (alcohol produced from the fermentation of corn) and "cellulosic ethanol" (alcohol produced from the fermentation of plant fibers, as found in such wild plants as switchgrass and also in paper and other materials that constitute up to 70% of urban waste).
- The burning of either corn ethanol or cellulosic ethanol contributes no net addition to Global Warming; it just becomes part of the natural carbon-dioxide cycle: The same amount of CO₂ released by burning

either biofuel is later re-absorbed by the photosynthesis of the corn or other green plants that will be harvested to produce the next batch of ethanol.

- Biofuels are generally opposed by Big Oil (although much research into cellulosic ethanol is being backed by Big Oil and chemical companies, looking to corner the next energy market).
- Big Food (the food-manufacturing and -retailing industry) has been making record profits but using a well-funded PR campaign to blame increased food prices, and starvation overseas, on the demand for corn by U.S. corn ethanol producers—even though food prices continue to rise even as corn prices have fallen 50% over the last year, and even though only about a quarter of the U.S. field corn production is going to corn ethanol production, and even though only a few cents of the price of a box of corn flakes or a pound of meat pays for all the corn used in its production.

The following articles show how despite such opposition, Barack Obama and Tom Vilsack will be promoting the development of biofuel technologies, in order to secure a homegrown source of affordable energy that will not add to

Global Warming. As Obama has said, "Tom understands that the solution to our energy crisis will be found not in the oil fields abroad but in our farm fields here at home." That is "change we need"—compared to having George "Big Oil" Bush or John "Big Oil" McCain in the White House.