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AGRIBUSINESS

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Brazil may become second main world producer of biodiesel this year

Agência Brasil*

Brasília – With the greater consumption of B2 (mineral diesel with a compulsory mixture of 2% biodiesel), Brazil may leap from the fourth to the second position among the main world producers of biodiesel, overtaking Italy and France, second only to Germany.

The statement was made by the director of the Renewable Fuel Department at the Ministry of Mines and Energy, Ricardo Dornelles, on stating that production in 2007 was 450 million litres and should reach 850 million litres this year.

Dornelles pointed out the global demand for clean sources of energy, due to climate and environmental matters: "Markets are going to open up and Brazil may become a large exporter of biodiesel. This depends on other nations implementing their programs, breaking barriers and establishing standards, but we have great potential."

According to the ministry, between 60% and 70% of Brazilian biodiesel is currently produced from soy oil. Animal fat and castor seeds answer to around 10%, each, and the remains come from cultures that are not so intensive. But from the technical point of view, soy is not the best option, as it presents lower productivity in litres of oil per hectare sown than do other sources, like castor beans and sunflower.

"There is government concern in strengthening other cultures, so that they may post greater productivity," stated Dornelles.

He guaranteed that, for consumers of biofuels, price changes should be minimal due to the compulsory mixture of B2, mainly due to competition among retailers.

***Translated by Mark Ament**

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