

Agricultural and Vegetable Oils Bulletin

Standards to be used when inspecting Biofuel and Bio Component cargoes

**Bulletin 22-01
Rev. 0 - 0**

There has been an increased use of bio components within hydrocarbon fuels and fuel blends in recent years. One type of feedstock used extensively is Used Cooking Oils (UCO), and similar vegetable oil-based cargoes, these having traditionally been traded using the edible oil FOSFA requirements and protocols. TIC Council member companies frequently encounter issues of documentation and procedure whilst doing their best to ensure the cargoes are handled in the manner expected by the customers.

Cargoes loaded from suppliers under FOSFA requirements include specific procedures relating to measurement, calculations, sampling and sealing. These requirements do not transfer across directly to meet the traditional requirements as set out in hydrocarbon industry standards, such as the well-established publications by API, EI, ISO or indeed, some of the customer specific guidelines and requirements.

One area of special concern is sampling, as the alignment and standards to be utilized are either weak or even wholly absent. Many feedstock cargoes, and particularly UCO parcels, are transported in flexible bladder tanks, and no international standards yet exist for obtaining representative samples from this type of container. The TIC Council guidance on this is that a documented dialogue should be held between the member company and the customer(s) agreeing on some form of sampling regime. This may be on a one off spot basis or may form a standing instruction, but a form of record is needed in order for disputes to be minimized.

In addition, there may be further country certification requirements to handle the cargo inspection of potentially food product feedstocks, such as the requirements of the Malaysian Palm Oil Board (MPOB) for specific certification for inspectors. In such cases only those MPOB certified inspectors will be permitted to perform the inspection.

Customers nominating TIC Council member companies should provide as much detail as possible with regards to the end use of the cargo, as well as the specific contractual sales terms, as these will impact the procedures to be followed and administrative requirements. By supplying this comprehensive instruction detail they can ensure that any limitations are fully understood and acknowledged.

TIC Council member companies must ensure the customers are made fully aware of the supplier and / or local legal requirements and the conditions under which cargoes will be loaded, especially if this limits or departs from the normal (hydrocarbon industry) customer procedures. With the various requirements of FOSFA or hydrocarbon standards, TIC Council member companies will ensure only suitably trained, and where necessary registered, inspection staff are utilized for the work to ensure the correct standards are followed. In the case of FOSFA shipments, only FOSFA member superintendents will undertake the inspections as required by FOSFA contractual terms. Order review and clear communication as to any misalignment are very much the key to avoiding or resolving these matters.

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Revisions/Reaffirmations

Rev. 0 October 2022