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What is the Best Biodiesel Feedstock Oil?

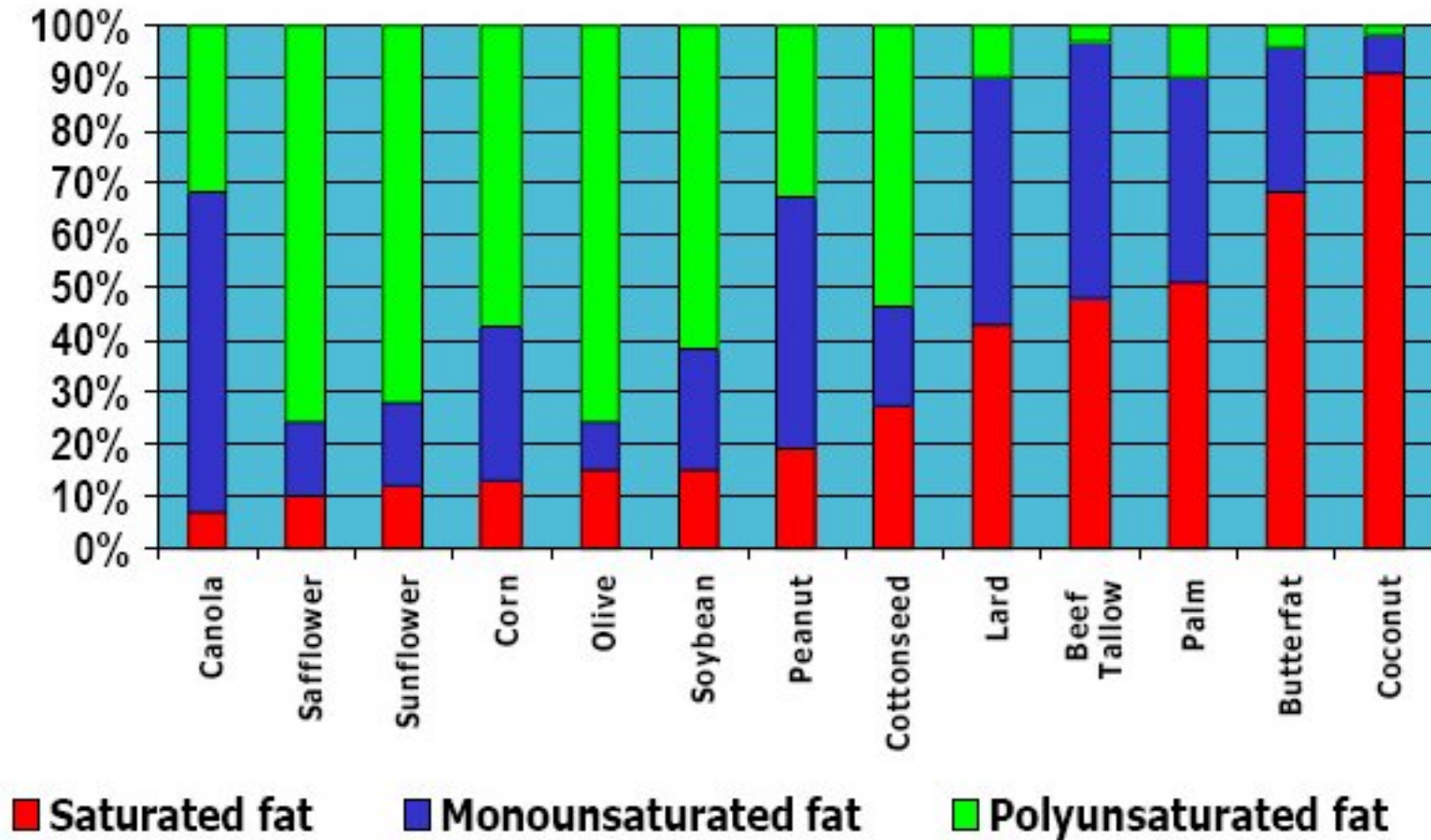
We have several things to consider when choosing our starting feedstock from which to make biodiesel. Perhaps the most important consideration deals with what you can get your hands on. For the home brewer, this has traditionally been used French fry oil. Unfortunately, many home brewers have never bothered to find out what oil or oils they are dealing with. If you have some choices, then we recommend you select feedstock oils that have very low amounts of saturated fat. We have provided a chart for you that shows the percentages of saturated fat, mono-unsaturated fat, and polyunsaturated fat in thirteen popular feedstock oils.

If you can, choose oils from the left side of the chart. Rapeseed (canola) and sunflower seeds make excellent feedstock oils. These particular oils produce biodiesel that has the best possible cold flow characteristics. In addition, biodiesel from these oils also can be easily treated with our B100 Cold Flow Improver additive for even lower cold flow properties. If you're living on a farm, you might wish to consider growing these crops. We can supply an oil press to remove the oil from the seeds. With just simple filtering, i.e., through a bed sheet, these oils will titrate around 2.0 and make excellent biodiesel without any other preliminary steps. The residue material makes an excellent cattle feed, also without any additional steps.

On the other side of the coin, if you're working from the right side of the chart with very high percentages of saturated fat, you must pretreat these materials using a caustic strip. Yes, it's possible to make biodiesel from cow fat, but the end product will tend to gel at relatively high temperatures. If you're living in the tropics or the desert, this may be acceptable. Unfortunately, our Cold Flow Improver does not provide much help with highly saturated oils.

Your first choice should be to work with pure vegetable oils, not hydrogenated, and from the left side of our chart. Virgin oil will require less lye than used oils, but both will produce good fuel.

Biodiesel Feedstock Composition



Data from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory