



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on April 23, 2014

Study: Some Biofuels Release More Greenhouse Gases Than Gasoline

A new scientific study published by the peer-reviewed *Nature Climate Change* reveals that some federally subsidized ethanol biofuels produce more carbon dioxide than burning gasoline, when the entire production process is taken into consideration.

The study considered the impact of the conversion of cellulosic corn stalks — not the corn itself — to biofuels through the use of various methods, such as the introduction of enzymes to convert sugars in the stalks into ethanol. The authors [noted](#) in the story, published in *Nature Climate Change* April 20, that use of corn stalks to make ethanol requires additional farm acreage and additional natural gas-produced fertilizers. Also, ethanol is produced in facilities that use electricity from gas or coal-fired plants. The study concluded: “Removal of corn residue for biofuels can decrease soil organic carbon and increase CO₂ emissions because residue [carbon] in biofuels is oxidized to CO₂ at a faster rate than when added to soil.”

The production of carbon dioxide is acknowledged by the scientific community as a greenhouse gas, and politicians worldwide have blamed it for modest (and perhaps dubious) “global warming” measured in most climate studies over the past few decades.

Regardless of the science of climate change, the study calls into question the policy choice of creating taxpayer subsidies for biofuels as an aid in limiting carbon dioxide emissions. Indeed, biofuels have also been blamed for atmospheric introduction of nitrogen, according to a [2013 study](#) by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The IPCC reported that they expect the growing mid-century global population to be “the potentially largest contributor to nitrogen use, as a result of large amounts of biofuels required and the fertiliser used to produce it.” And on April 10 of this year, the IPCC [acknowledged](#), “Some biofuels are contested due to fear for food security and high lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions of some fuel types.” Much of this information was [reported by The New American’s Michael Tennant](#) back in November 13, 2013.

The market for cellulose-based ethanol has been littered with failures even with massive taxpayer subsidies. The *Washington Post* [acknowledged](#) on September 8, 2013 that despite federal subsidies for cellulosic ethanol production, such as a \$250-million loan guarantee to Coskata, “Today, most of the dozen contenders have gone out of business or shelved their plans.” In the case of Coskata, the *Post* reported, “Coscata never did make commercial volumes of ethanol made from raw cellulosic material such as corn stalks, switch grass, wood chips, municipal waste and other biomass. Last year, Coskata changed strategy — to use natural gas instead. In July this year, it backed out of a planned \$100 million initial public offering.”

Federal policies of subsidies for ethanol will nevertheless likely continue for some time with support from the Obama administration and corn-belt state congressmen, and driven by global-warming alarmism based upon [apocalyptic global flood maps drawn by amateur graphic designers](#).



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