



Recycling Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG): Myth and Fact

Myth: All FOG is recyclable. This is not true as we will see. When dealing with the topic of FOG recycling, it is necessary to understand the two relevant federal classifications of FOG.

Fact:

1. **Yellow grease:** FOG recovered from dry filter hoods, grills, and fryers that has not been in contact with water. Yellow grease can be recycled for uses such as biodiesel, glycerin for cosmetics, soaps, and other uses involving human contact except food. Yellow grease previously was used in animal feed supplements, but that use has been discouraged since animal nerve and blood materials have been associated with mad-cow disease. It is very difficult to determine if those substances have been in contact with spent FOG.
2. **Brown grease:** FOG that has been in contact with drain water such as from water wash ventilation hoods, grease interceptors, and other drain-connected fixtures. Brown grease post-use is restricted to those uses that do not involve human or animal contact such as paints, lubricants, compost, and methane generators. Non-post-use disposal consists of landfill, designated wastewater treatment plant receipt and disposal, land application, and incineration. Non-use disposal is losing popularity as greater attention is being paid to possible alternate energy sources. Brown grease is not suitable for biodiesel production because of contaminants and partial hydrolysis; however, experimentation with methane production using brown grease in conjunction with agricultural waste is increasing.