



### THE BLUES GO GREEN

Labor Day weekend, one of the Navy's most recognizable units became the first unit in DoD to fly entirely on a biofuels blend. The Pensacola-based Blue Angels, known for their extreme aerobatic demonstrations of Navy and Marine Corps air combat tactics, powered all six of their F/A-18 Hornets with a 50/50 blend of conventional JP-5 jet fuel and a camelina-based biofuel.

"This weekend's performance is the

ultimate demonstration of the Navy's commitment to reducing dependence on foreign oil, as well as safeguarding our environment through the incorporation of cleaner, more sustainable and renewable energy sources," Blue Angels' public affairs MC3 Andrew Johnson said leading into the weekend.

Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus announced last week that the team would fly the weekend's show on biofu-

els, calling it "another visible step toward testing biofuel in our aircraft."

The Navy has previously tested numerous aircraft on the biofuels blend but never employed an entire unit on the mix.

Capt. Greg McWherter, Blue Angels Commanding Officer and flight leader said last month that he noted no noticeable performance differences from the new fuel. Before the show, he added that "the Blue Angels take pride in leading the country's efforts to reduce fossil fuel consumption and increase our energy security."

In May, the Air Force Thunderbirds flew two F-16 Vipers on a similar blend during an appearance at the JB Andrews Air Show. Both the Navy and the Air Force have been pursuing biofuels as a drop-in alternative to conventional JP-5 and JP-8 as a way of weaning the airborne services off of foreign fossil fuels.

The fuel used by the Blue Angels came from the seeds of the camelina plant, a mustard-like weed considered a non-competing feedstock because it can be farmed without affecting food crops.



**AM1 Chris Connolly applies a Navy "Energy Security" decal to a Blue Angels F/A-18 Hornet before the Air Expo at NAS Pax River, MD over Labor Day weekend.**

*Photo by MC1 Rachel McMarr*

### DOD, DOE, USDA RELEASE MAJOR BIOFUEL RFI

SECNAV Ray Mabus was joined by USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack and DoE Secretary Steven Chu on 31 August to announce the next step in the creation of a public-private partnership to develop drop-in advanced biofuels. The three Secretaries released an RFI that requests specific ideas on how to leverage private capital markets to establish a commercially viable drop-in biofuels industry.

The RFI, according to the release, will help accelerate the development and use of biofuels, reduce the Nation's demand for foreign oil, and strengthen rural America.

"Of particular interest," reads the RFI. "are the technical, manufacturing and

market barriers to establishing a viable business for advanced drop-in hydrocarbon biofuels."

Biofuel advocates believe the supply issue can be solved through the cultivation of crops like camelina that don't compete for land with food crops. Between the military and the commercial aviation sector, the demand side is obvious. But, what's missing, according to the RFI, is "a complete value chain" that ties together growers, processors, refiners and fuel sellers.

The RFI seeks "information pertaining to feedstock production, processing, transportation, and logistics, as well as the design, retrofit, construction, opera-

tion, validation, and qualification of multiple domestic, commercial-scale, integrated biorefineries (IBRs)" that together will give Americans cradle-to-grave control over their own domestically produced fuel.

The establishment of a market based on the RFI will leverage development capital from the U.S. government and private industry to stand up refining capacity, the buying power of DoD to test and certify the fuel, and the demand of military and commercial aviation to maintain a long-term cost competitive consumer base.

A full copy of the RFI can be found at <http://bit.ly/nNQ0oj>.