

# THE TIMES OF INDIA

## Project to produce biodiesel from used cooking oil

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Coimbatore: The food safety department plans to launch the repurpose used cooking oil (Ruco) project in the district next month to turn used edible oil from the food industry into biodiesel.

With the city corporation refusing to collect used oil and no other disposal method available, restaurants, bakeries and sweet makers here have been selling the oil to smaller food business operators and soap manufacturing units. Some pour it down the drains, leading to clogs.

Officials of the department, who recently attended a meeting conducted by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India in New Delhi, had met some people who run units that process cooking oil and convert it into biodiesel the closest one being in Hyderabad. According to a survey conducted by the department, 150-200 large-scale food business operators in the district generate 30,000 litres of used oil a day. The department plans to make them collect the oil daily and hand it over to an agent. "We are trying to identify an agent, who can collect the used oil from hotels and store it in a godown and then transport it to a processing unit to turn it into biodiesel," designated food safety officer K Tamilselvan said. "The agents will pay the hotels for the oil collected, so they don't lose the revenue they were earning."

The department hopes agents can collect oil from large-scale food business operators in Coimbatore from February to kick-start the project. It has identified 150 food business operators who consume more than 50 litres of cooking oil a day for the initiative.

The project is operational in Madurai, where 8,000 litres of used cooking oil is collected each day from 55 food outlets and restaurants. "They have some teething issues, but they are being sorted out," Tamilselvan told TOI.

Gastroenterologists warn against the reuse of cooking oil, which leads to short and long-term health issues. Studies show that a series of complex chemical reactions take place

altering constituents of cooking oil and free fatty acids, ketones, alcohols and other radicals are released when it is reheated.

“While it often leads to acidity and indigestion issues, in the long-term, it can lead to stomach and esophageal cancer,” Dr V G Mohan of VGM Hospital told TOI.