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HelioBioSys Inc. Patents Algae-like Organisms For Biofuels

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[Sandia National Laboratories announced that it is helping HelioBioSys Inc. learn whether farming cyanobacteria on a large scale would be successful in producing sugar for biofuels.](#) HelioBioSys Inc. patented a group of three non-genetically modified marine cyanobacteria for the production of sugars, which can then be converted into a variety of fuels and chemicals. Similar to algae, cyanobacteria grow in water and avoid competition with food crops for land, water, and other resources, making them a desirable renewable resource. Cyanobacteria colonies, however, grow more efficiently than algae and excrete sugars directly into the water where they grow. Whereas a typical algae farm may produce one gram of biomass per liter, small-scale testing of the cyanobacteria demonstrate that they can produce four to seven grams of sugar per liter of biomass, a 700 percent increase in efficiency. Additionally, filtering sugar from water is simpler and more cost effective than extracting lipids from algae.

Now that HelioBioSys has proven the efficacy of the cyanobacteria in a closed, controlled, sterile laboratory, the company is working with Sandia researchers to understand where predation may cause issues by growing the organisms in large open air raceway systems, and to further study how the three types of cyanobacteria work together.

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