

press release

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Picture captions:

Picture one: Scott Racing team left to right: Ian Dixon, Dr Rob Dominy and Tim Scott

GREEN ENGINE TO POWER TOURING CARS

A COUNTY Durham company is leading the world in its drive to develop the first biodiesel engine to power a top racing car.

Scott Racing Ltd is hoping to fit the first prototype, high performance race engine to run on 100% biodiesel (B100) into a vehicle in the Dunlop MSA British Touring Car Championship (BTCC).

One NorthEast has backed the project with a £62,000 DTI Grant for Research and Development. Scott Racing is keen to exploit a gap in the market as motor sport strives to boost its green credentials by adopting cleaner and more environmentally friendly fuels than petrol.

Company managing director and former Formula Ford 1600 driver Tim Scott is heading a five-man team at Mountjoy Research Centre in Durham to progress engine development.

They are aiming to have a car running partly on biodiesel in the BTCC during the 2007 season which runs from April to October – with a 100% biodiesel (B100) fuelled vehicle on the track in 2008.

“Most of the existing cars run on petrol with a few on bioethanol - no-one has yet run a fully-biodiesel powered car, as technically it is much more challenging,” said Tim, 39, of Bishop Auckland.

“The British Touring Car Championship has led the way with regards to cleaner fuels, they are crying out for someone to bring in a biodiesel car and they are very supportive of our development.

“I’m passionate about motor sport and would like to see it become more environmentally friendly. I think we can make a diesel car competitive in the short term and gradually ramp up the percentage of biodiesel in the fuel and be competitive in a 100% biodiesel powered touring car next year.”

Race teams will typically pay £200,000 for the design and build of a production engine to race specification, with each new engine after that costing up to £30,000 – teams using up to four race engines per car, per year.

Tim has enlisted the help of Dr Rob Dominy – Director of the Centre for Automotive Research at Durham University – to lead project research and development and Ian Dixon – a former world championship cyclist - to manage company marketing.

“It is very likely that Formula One as well as other championships will turn increasingly to green fuels and look at energy saving technology,” said Ian, 45, of Richmond, North Yorkshire.

“This is the right time for this project; the environment is high on everyone’s agenda, so people are much more aware and we believe we have the capability to deliver a competitive biodiesel engine.”

Alan Gow, British Touring Car Championship Administrator and Series Director, said: "I'm delighted to hear of Scott Racing's plans – which I certainly hope come to fruition.

"The BTCC would welcome biodiesel technology and I'm surprised no competitor has yet taken this route. The BTCC is the premier motor racing championship in the UK meaning such a project will be closely followed by the media and public.

"In fact, I imagine that such a project would gather considerable intrigue and support from the many millions of fans who watch the BTCC at the circuit and on television each year."

A key aim of the project is to produce a reliable engine with enough power to compete with the current petrol powered cars.

David Allison, One NorthEast Director of Business and Industry, said: "The Research and Development Grant is specifically designed to fund projects at the cutting edge of technology and innovation.

"The biodiesel race engine exactly fits this criteria and One NorthEast will continue to nurture companies such as Scott Racing who push back technological boundaries."

ITV television coverage of the British Touring Car Championship regularly attracts more than one million viewers on Sunday afternoons during the summer and the Scott Racing team is hoping this will prove a lure to potential sponsors for the team to allow it to compete successfully in the championship with its "green" engine. A number of North East companies have already shown interest in the project.

Biodiesel could be sourced from the burgeoning North East biofuels industry, most likely derived from oil seed rape or palm oil.

Biodiesel is estimated to add 85% less carbon dioxide to the atmosphere from engine emissions in comparison to conventional petrol driven cars. The Scott Racing team has spent more than a year developing its biodiesel engine project.

Tim said: "The Research and Development Grant from One NorthEast has massively increased the potential of this project and enabled us to be far more innovative."

Further information on biodiesel and Scott Racing's progress will be posted on the team's website www.scottracing.com throughout the year.

Ends.

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