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**POET partners to fight pollution, deforestation in Haiti**

*Project Gaia replaces wood-burning stoves with ethanol stoves*

**SIOUX FALLS, SD(Jan. 28, 2015)** – [POET](http://www.poet.com/) is fighting pollution and deforestation in Haiti through a new partnership with [Project Gaia](https://projectgaia.com/) to replace wood-burning stoves with clean, ethanol-fueled [cook stoves](https://projectgaia.com/our-approach/the-stove/).

Today, most Haitians rely on charcoal and firewood to cook their daily meals. Consequentially, the nation has experienced extreme deforestation over the years, and now less than 2 percent of Haiti’s forest cover remains. Additionally, the United Nations estimates that the average lifespan in Haiti is shortened by 6.6 years due to illnesses caused by household air pollution, which results from burning wood and charcoal indoors.

To help remedy this problem, POET is teaming up with Project Gaia to supply the ethanol needed to power clean-burning stoves. [Dometic](http://www2.dometic.com/3bd0d450-1131-4f8f-8ce7-90e8283815e0.fodoc), another partner in the project, is supplying the stoves, which will eventually be made locally, and [Novogaz](http://community.cleancookstoves.org/partners/item/21/870) is organizing local distribution in Haiti. POET has selected [POET Biorefining – Jewell](http://www.poet.com/jewell) to produce the ethanol needed to fuel the cook stoves. Project partners gathered in Haiti this past April to develop and discuss a plan to bring U.S. ethanol to Haiti for home cooking.

The first 6,200 gallons of ethanol cleared Haitian customs on December 31, 2014. POET Founder and Executive Chairman of the Board Jeff Broin donated approximately 12,000 gallons of ethanol to jumpstart the project.

“The vision for this project is clear: to bring clean-burning ethanol fuel to the homes in third-world countries in order to improve the standard of living and drive positive socio-economic change,” said Broin. “For decades, we’ve known ethanol to be a clean, renewable fuel for our automobiles, and I look forward to bringing this same clean, renewable fuel to homes across the globe. With the help of our partners at Project Gaia, Dometic and Novogaz, I know we will be successful in our journey to bring clean cookstoves and clean energy to the world.”

“POET is leading the way in catalyzing a new market in Haiti for household energy. Ethanol offers perhaps the greatest opportunity to revitalize the agriculture sector and offer families a clean and affordable alternative to charcoal,” said Brady Luceno, Assistant Director of Project Gaia. “By working with a strong local partner like Novogaz, the first shipment of donated ethanol will lay the foundation for a viable and socially responsible Haitian business to grow.”

Project Gaia estimates if every home in Africa, Developing Asia, Latin America and the Middle East that is currently using traditional solid fuels (charcoal, wood and other biomass substrates) would switch to ethanol fuel for cooking it would save between 250 and 550 million forest acres per year. This is equivalent to over half the size of the Brazilian rainforest, or the size of Alaska, California and Texas combined.

For more information about Project Gaia’s efforts in Haiti, please visit <https://projectgaia.com/projects/haiti/>. Photos from the project can be viewed and downloaded through Project Gaia’s Flickr page: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/projectgaia/sets/72157640596142005/>.

**About POET**

POET, one of the world’s largest ethanol producers, is a leader in biorefining through its efficient, vertically integrated approach to production. The 25-year-old company has a production capacity in excess of 1.6 billion gallons of ethanol and 9 billion pounds of high-protein animal feed annually from its network of 27 production facilities. POET, through its joint venture with DSM, also operates a commercial-scale cellulosic ethanol plant in Emmetsburg, Iowa. For more information, visit <http://www.poet.com>.

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