

FNE03-453

TEST BATCHES! If this had happened early in the season when we needed those furnaces for severely low temperatures we would have been looking at some severely reduced farm income! Fortunately this wasn't the case and the cost for a new filter cartridge and a new nozzle put us back by less than \$8.

The only other hurdle we would like to overcome is the issue of the amount of time it takes us to produce the fuel we need for our greenhouses. If it takes us over 5 person hours to make a 50 gallon batch, and if we value that time at \$10 per hour, that adds a steep dollar per gallon to our costs! OUCH! The only way to get around this, we believe is to make larger batches. It would take very little extra time to double or triple our batch size, effectively reducing time per gallon by  $\frac{1}{2}$  or  $\frac{2}{3}$ .

In any case, knowing that we can produce a bumper crop of early tomatoes for our customers at our markets and not have to depend on petroleum fuels to do it feels pretty good. Saving 25 to 40% on our fuel bills just makes it that much sweeter.

Recommended reading: From the Fryer to the Fuel Tank, The complete guide to using vegetable oil as an alternative fuel. By Joshua Tickell, published by Tickell Energy Consultants, Covington, LA 2000