

Restaurants to help power your car?

By [Brett Legree](#), 01/22/2009 [Comments \(0\)](#) | 

Photo credit: [Kitchen](#)

I have a few friends who drive diesel powered cars, and they are seriously investigating the use of waste vegetable oil to power their vehicles. Some local restaurants are willing to give them the waste oil, free of charge.

But thanks to the [Vegawatt](#) Cogeneration Power System from [Owl Power Company](#) in Boylston, Massachusetts, my friends may not find it so easy to obtain their cheap [biodiesel](#).

According to Ben Prentice, the VP of Sales at Owl, the currently available Vegawatt produces 5 kilowatts of electricity while using 50 to 80 gallons of waste oil—the amount produced weekly by a typical restaurant. This translates to approximately 10-15 percent of the power requirements of an average restaurant. Owl estimates that the \$22,000 system would pay for itself in approximately four years.

A 12 kilowatt unit is currently under development for larger applications, such as supermarkets. Owl also says that it should be technically feasible to run several units in tandem for additional power production.

The self-contained Vegawatt system filters, heats, dewateres and prepares the waste vegetable oil for use as a fuel automatically. All the operator has to do is pour the oil into the machine. The manufacturer provides parts and service for the first two years of operation. A federal tax credit of 10 percent, combined with applicable state tax credits, should help make the Vegawatt a very attractive alternative power source for many in the food services industry.

While the Vegawatt can't do anything for your waistline (everything in moderation!), it can help reduce our reliance on [non-renewable resources](#), such as [fossil fuel](#).

I'll eat to that!

