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We are receiving a significant increase in calls from customers experiencing difficulties with their stored Gas Oil.

This includes companies we have supplied for in some cases, over 40 years without issues...until now. We are aware of the reasons and cause of this issue, and we feel it important to keep you informed:

WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS?

Gas Oil now contains Biodiesel (Known as FAME)

The FAME content drops out of the Gas Oil and remains at the bottom of the tank along with any contaminants and/or water. It then absorbs any water present and creates a bacterial growth that can contaminate the fuel in the form of a black sludge. The bacteria also remains on the walls of metal tanks – but not plastic tanks.

WHY ARE WE SEEING ISSUES NOW?

From 2006, EU legislation was created for FAME (or Biodiesel) to be blended with road diesel at 7%. Generally, there have not been any issues within the road fuel industry.

However, the EU legislation to include FAME in Gas Oil has been resisted by the Farming, Generator, and Marine industry for several years.

Fuel Oils did find suppliers that would guarantee Gas Oil with zero FAME for as long as was possible. But sadly, the EU enforced a mandatory requirement that as of May 2018, Fame **MUST** be blended with all Gas Oil at a ratio of up to 7.25%, and from January 2019, this rose to 8.50% with a further rise in 2020 to 9.75%.

HOW IS THIS ISSUE SOLVED?

There are many Gas Oil users that have most likely not cleaned their tanks for some time because there have been no issues and therefore no need to. Tanks have been able to cope with quantities of water because it always sinks to the bottom of the tank, and up to now, as long as it sat below the draw point, it did not cause any issues.

With the FAME being present in Gas Oil since May 2018, there has been a long enough period to allow the bug to develop and cause contamination.

For severe cases of contamination, a tank clean is recommended to remove the residue build up from the bottom of the tank. If there is a large quantity of fuel in the tank, it can be treated with an additive that kills the bug – which is a better alternative than polishing or even scrapping the fuel. There are a growing number of fuel additive manufacturers appearing in the marketplace. We work with one in particular as they have providing solutions for some years and their products are effective.

We have also discovered that older fuel pump hoses dedicated to Gas Oil use are being affected by the biodiesel and producing a black residue in plant filters. It is worth checking that existing older plant now has the correct hoses to tolerate the biodiesel element in the Gas Oil.