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# The Future of Fuels and Alternative Feedstocks – Recognizing Hype vs. Practical Limitations

# Engineering



*Too much hype for the possible and not enough focus on the practical*

*Chemical Engineering is letting society down!*



# Business vs. Academic Success



Challenges to Society



Invention



Impact to Society



Academic Success



Business Success

**What people want  $\neq$  What they will pay for  $\neq$  What they can afford**

**What they will pay for impacts society**



Economic Viability



Risk vs. Reward

# Business Success vs. SCIENCE



Impact to Society = Business Success

High



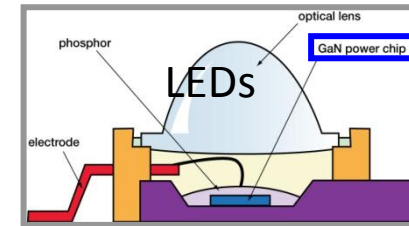
Man Made Diamonds



Transistors



Antibiotics



Low

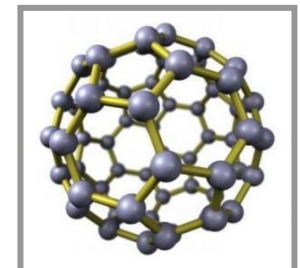


H<sub>2</sub> fuel cells



SkyMine®

Ethylene Styrene  
Interpolymers

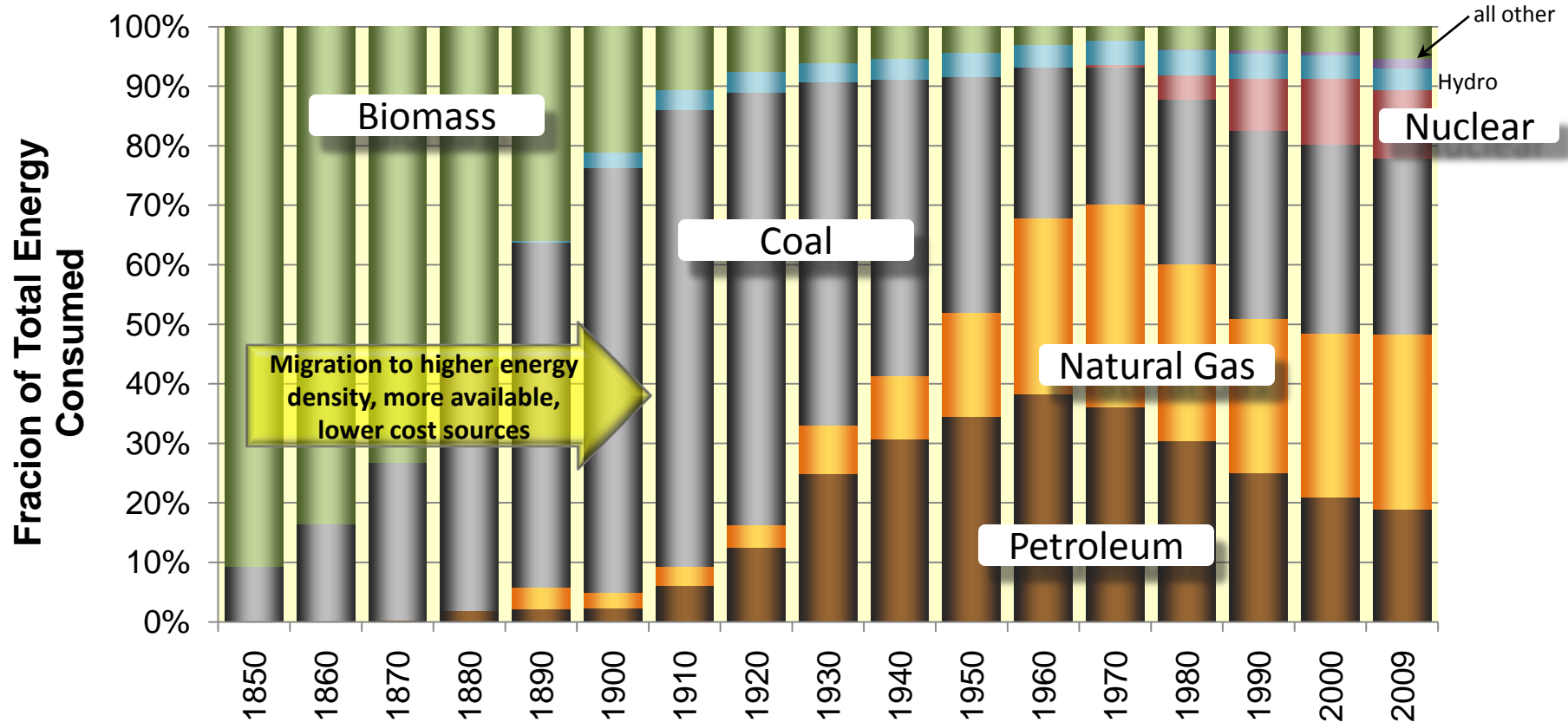


Low

Quality of Science

High

# Energy Sources Have Changed



What's Changed?

- Oil Price Rise
- CO2 awareness



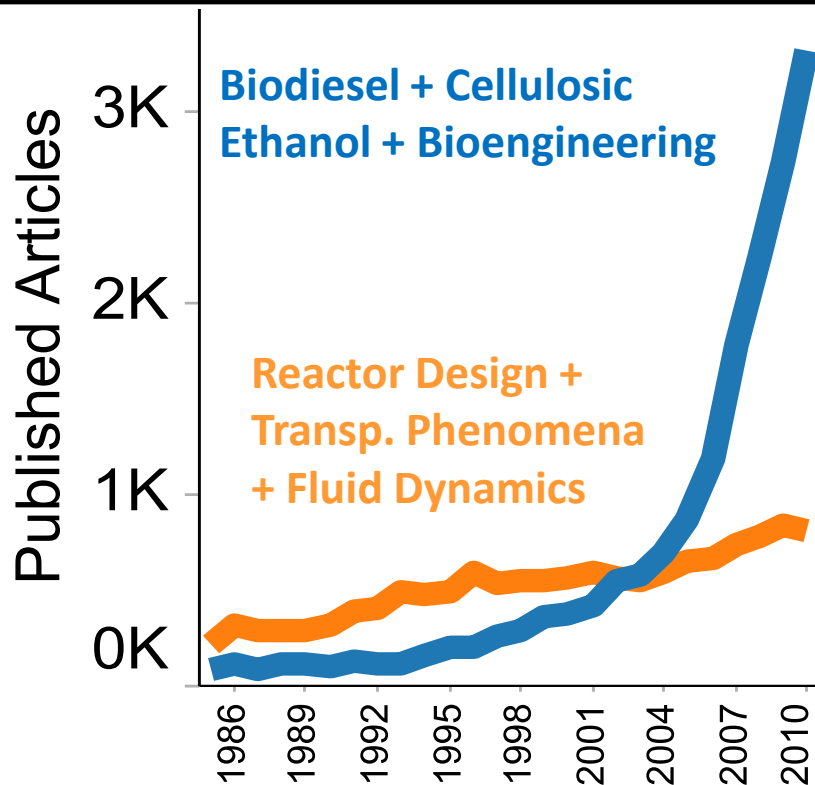
Is that enough?



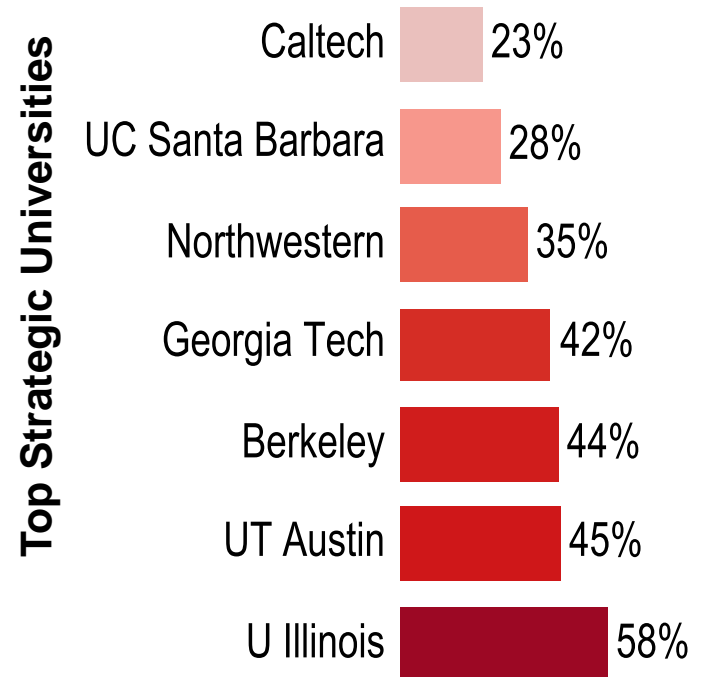
# Funding Follows the Hype



Published Articles Reflect the Focus on “Bio” Related Research:



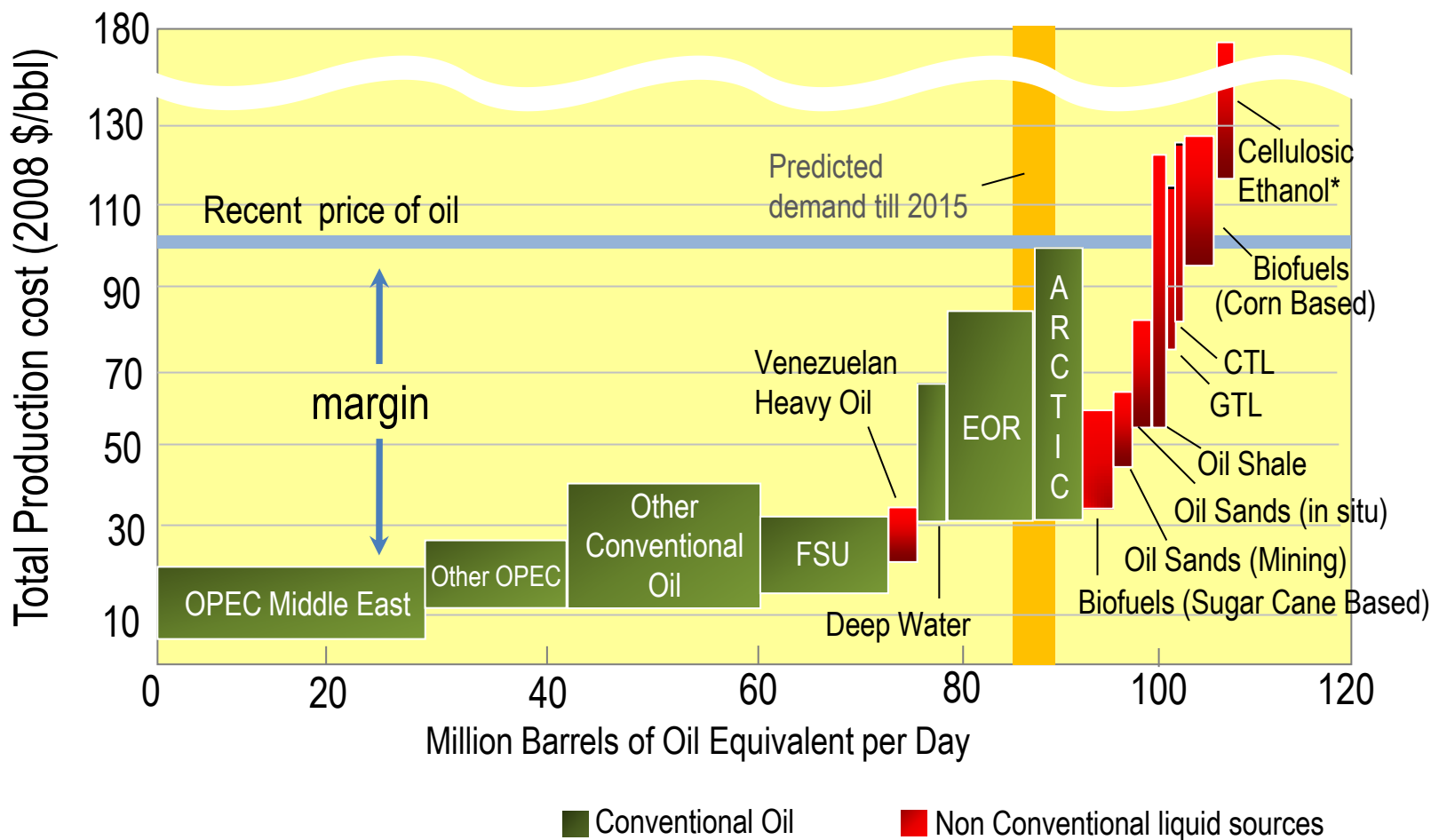
Percentage of Faculty with “Bio” Related Research Interests:



*Dynamic range of the discipline is threatened by decreasing support of the traditional core research areas.*

# Energy Industry Dynamics

*As oil price rises, new capital will flow to EOR, Arctic, Oil sands, GTL, CTL before biofuels.*



\*Based on DOE volume projections for US in 2022. DOE price target is ~\$113/bbl

# Recognizing Fads

The art of being wise is the art of knowing what to overlook - William James



## Hydrogen Car



"We asked ourselves, 'Is it likely in the next 10 or 15, 20 years that we will convert to a hydrogen car economy?' The answer, we felt, was 'no,'" *Steve Chu, Energy Secretary, May 2009*

## Corn Ethanol



"...Using land to grow fuel leads to the destruction of forests, wetlands and grasslands that store enormous amounts of carbon."

*Michael Grunwald, TIME April 2007*

## Biodiesel

"Biofuels are contributing to higher prices and tighter markets."

*Timothy Searchinger, Princeton University April 2011*



## Cellulosic Ethanol

"...the need for trucks, machinery and manpower would come during harvest, already the busiest time of the year on the farm. And that's where a massive federal initiative into cellulosic ethanol may find its biggest bottleneck – on the farm."

*Robert Rapier*



 **Bio Plastics** 



Dow launched the JV with Cargill in 1997 to develop and market PLA from corn, exited the JV in 2004.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

## "Sun Chips Bag to Lose Its Crunch"



Photo: Associated Press

Bio based packaging launched in 2009 but discontinued by late 2010, due to performance perception issues

Glycerin to Epi 

Dow postponed in 2009 due to uncertain supply +

**Natural oil Polyols**  
**RENUVA**   
Dow Launched in 2007, exited in 2010.

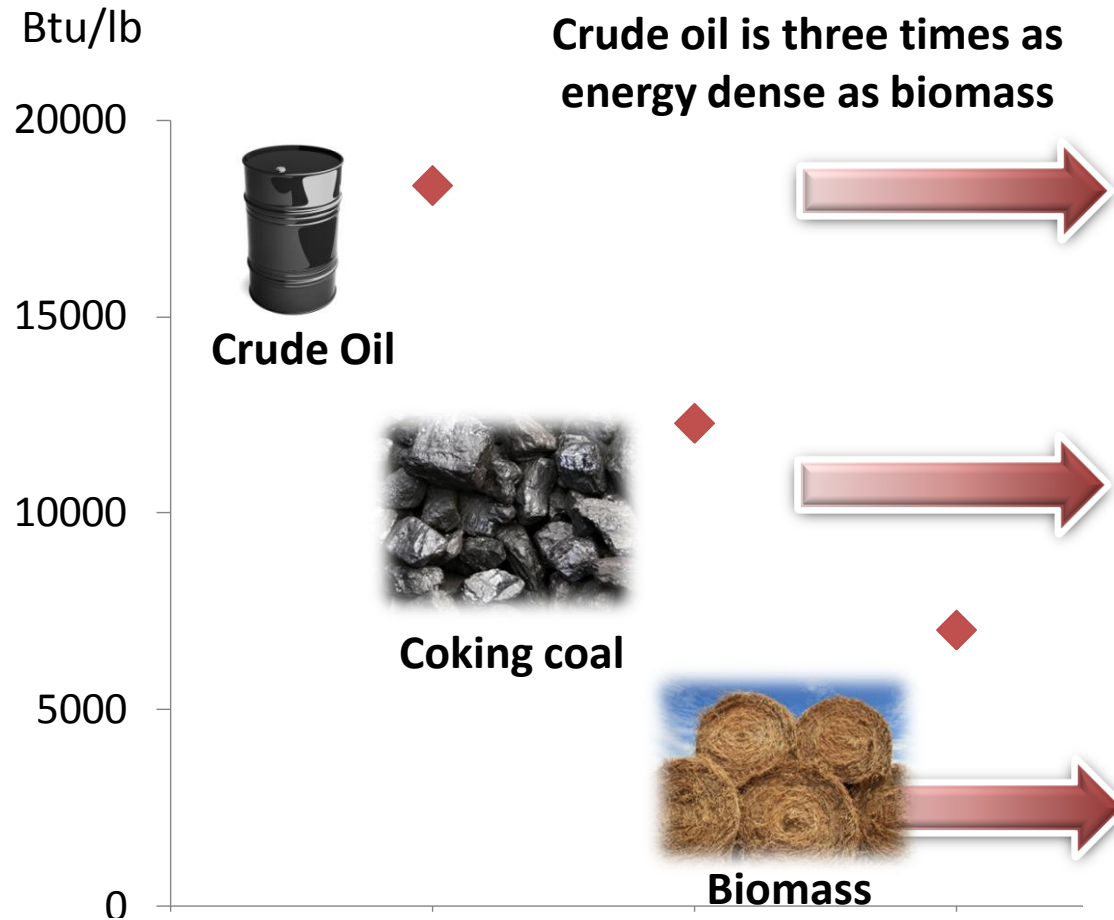


# Biofuels Key Issues



- **How much *biomass is available?***  
*not enough to replace fossil fuels*
- **How much *will the biomass cost?***  
*it is not cheap!*
- **How much *will biofuels cost?*** *more than fossil*
- **How much *more are we willing to pay?*** *no premium*
- **How realistic *is chemical production from biomass?***  
*we already do, but chemical use doesn't address the big issues*

# Migration to Higher Energy Density Sources



Energy Equivalency	\$ Capital / Usable MM Btu
1 Oil Refinery	\$164
27 Power Plants	\$167
60 Ethanol Refineries	\$321*

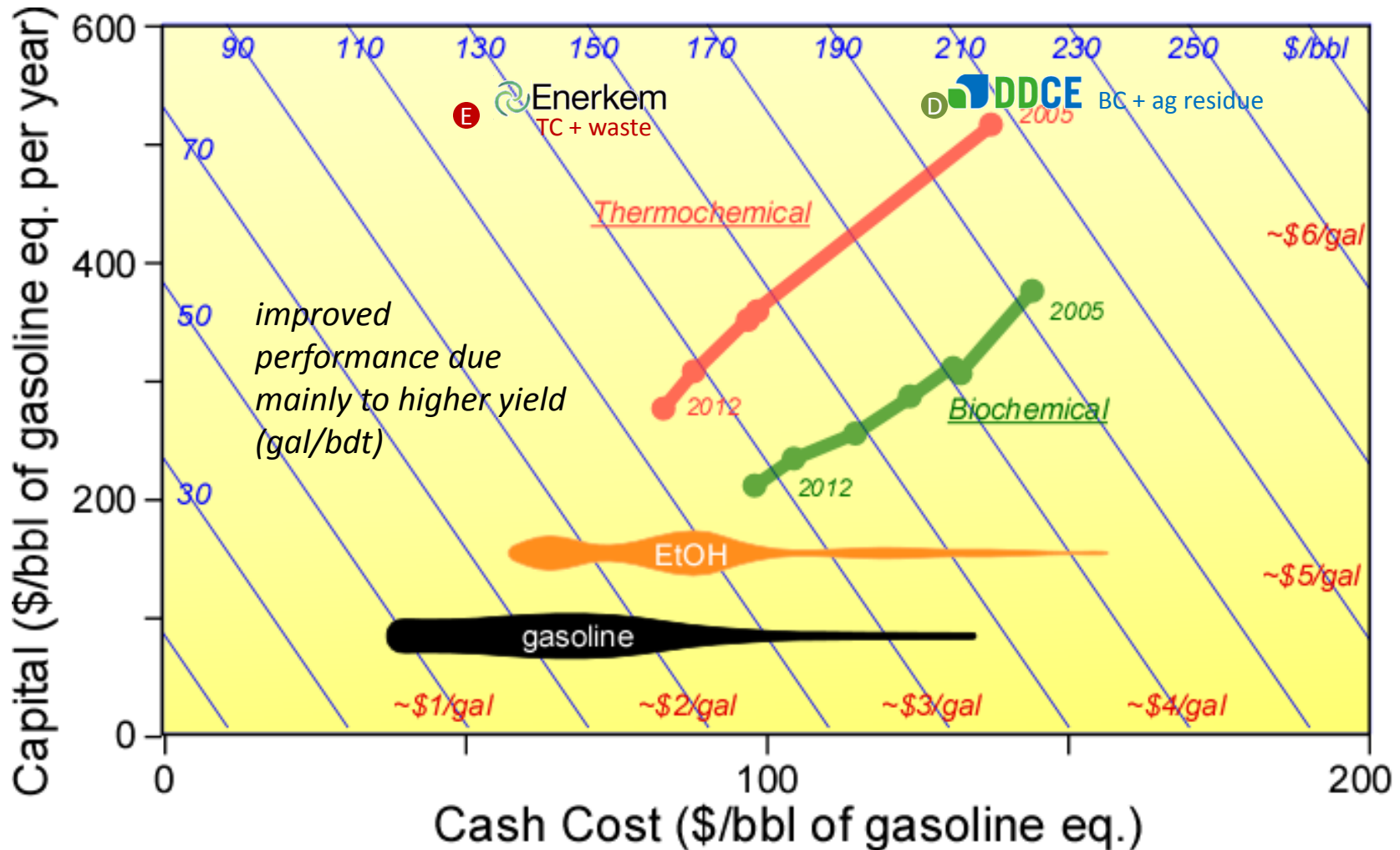
\*land & water penalty not included

*Energy from fossil infrastructure built over 80-100 years defines our current standard of living*

Sources: Heating values from GREET, Argonne National Lab, May 2008; Refinery size and economics by Oil & Gas Journal construction update, Dec 2010; Coal fired plant economics and size from Congressional Research Service report 2008; Ethanol plant of 100 MM gal/yr from DOE targets and economics estimated internally

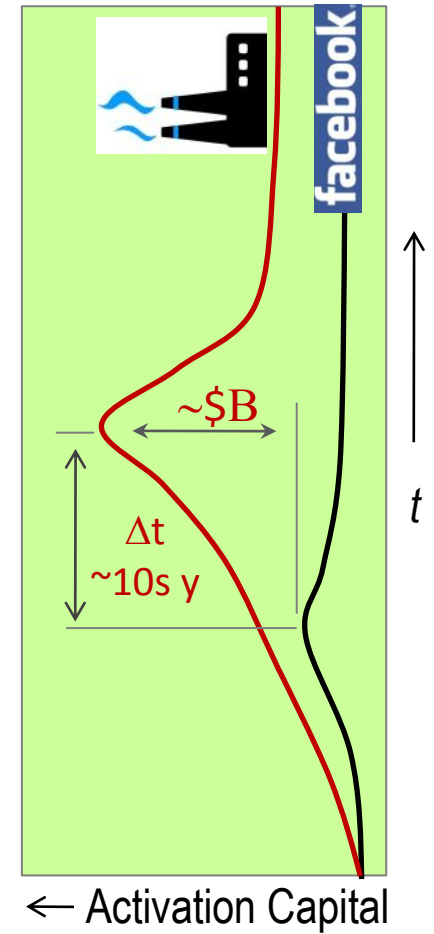
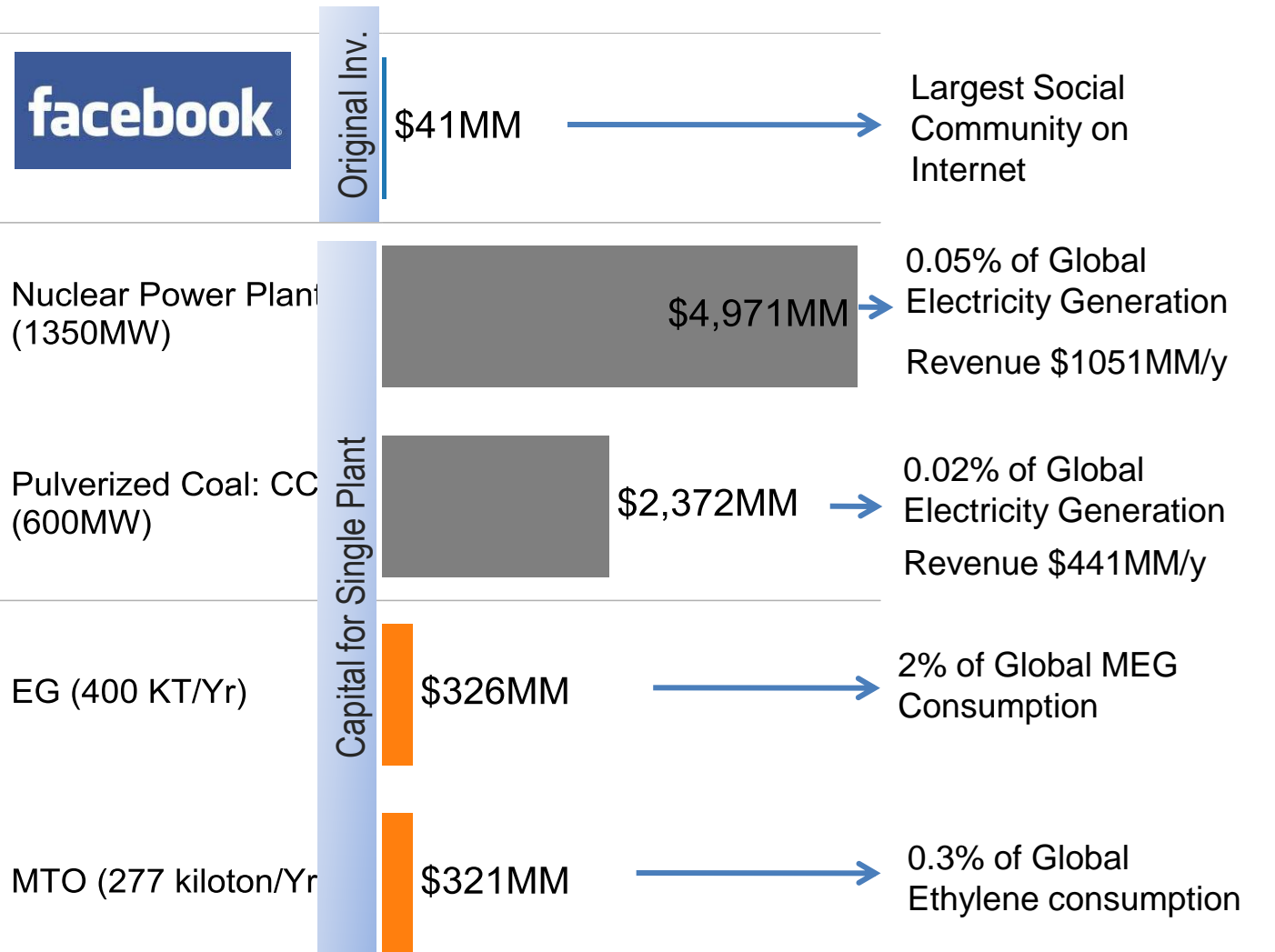
# The Cellulosic Fad

*High cash and capital costs*



Sources:  
 Crude Oil price, CMAI, Spot Average FOB price; monthly average prices from Jan 2005 to Jan 2011  
 Targets from DOE for Biochemical and Thermochemical routes; Capital from Biomass Multi Year Program 201 report from DOE (revisited by DOE on Nov 2010)  
 Corn Ethanol from the Center of Agricultural and Rural Development from Jan 2005 to Jan 2011

# Scale of Fuels Makes it Harder



**Sources:** facebook original investment showing combined amounts from Peter Thiel (PayPal cofounder), Accel Partners and Greylock Partners as described in the History of facebook on wikipedia; Power Plants: RL34746 report - Stan Kaplan - Congressional Research Service; MTO: PEP Report 261 – SRI and EG: PEP Report 21 – SRI; **Revenues** for Power Plants calculated using 2010 electricity average retail prices (all sectors) 9.88 cents/kWh (data from DOE)

# Timeline for Impact



Impact / Market Penetration

Invention



Development



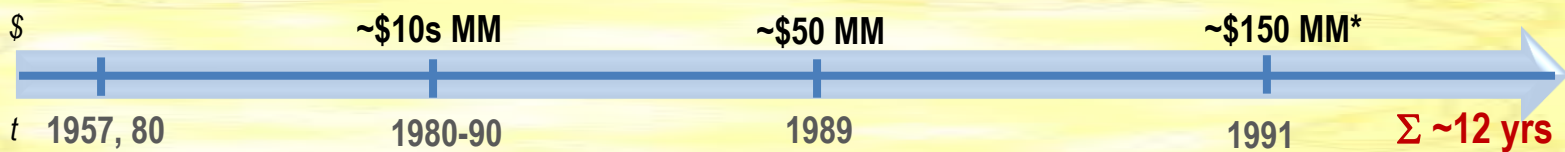
Demonstration



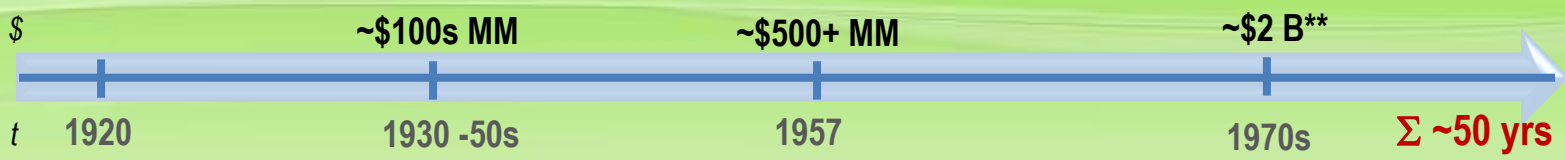
Deployment



Single Site Catalysis



Super Critical Coal Power

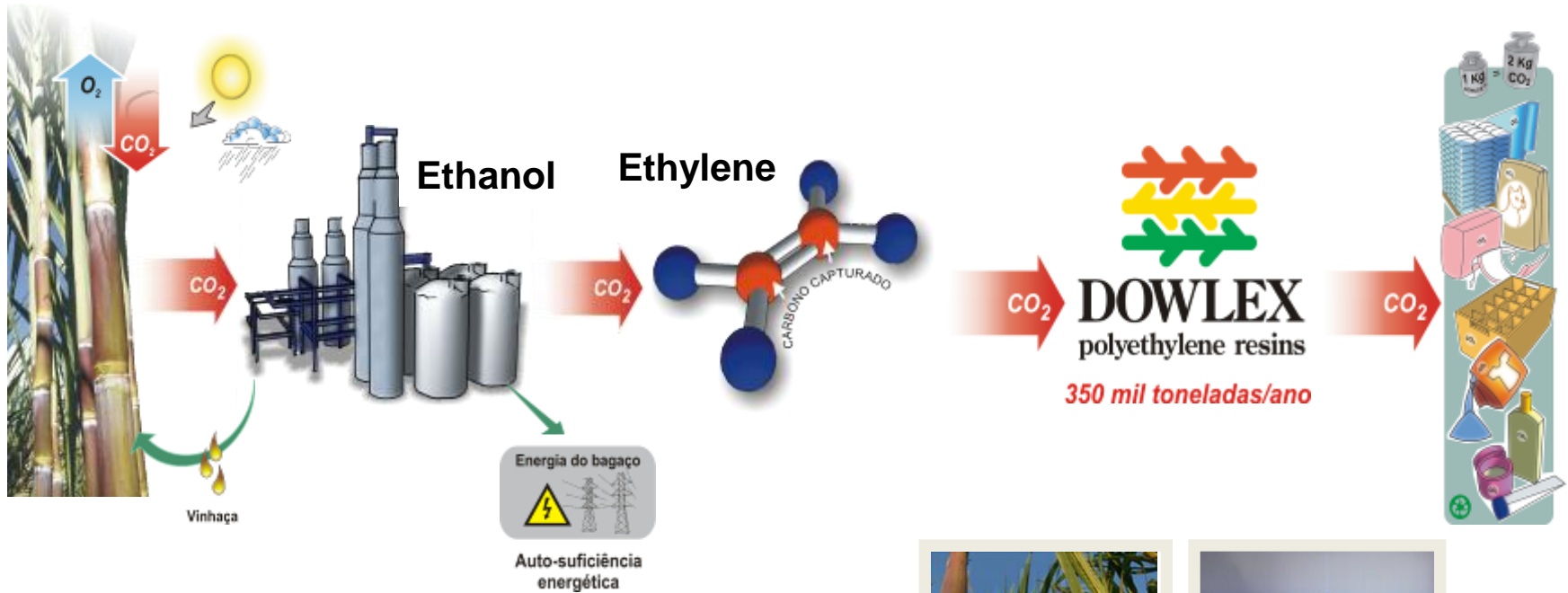


Sources: SRI PEP LLDPE 36E 2008, SRI PEP 153B 2001 Single site catalysts for PE Production, AEP Power Co, World Bank, EIA 2011 Energy Outlook, Electricity Market Module

\*400 mT LLDPE plant, 2008\$    \*\*600 MW plant, 2009\$



# Alternative Feedstock - Cane to LLDPE



Fully-integrated facility in Brazil  
Utilizes state-of-the-art Dow  
polymerization catalysis





# Ethanol to PE – A Niche Opportunity

Market prices and selected costs on energy equivalent basis

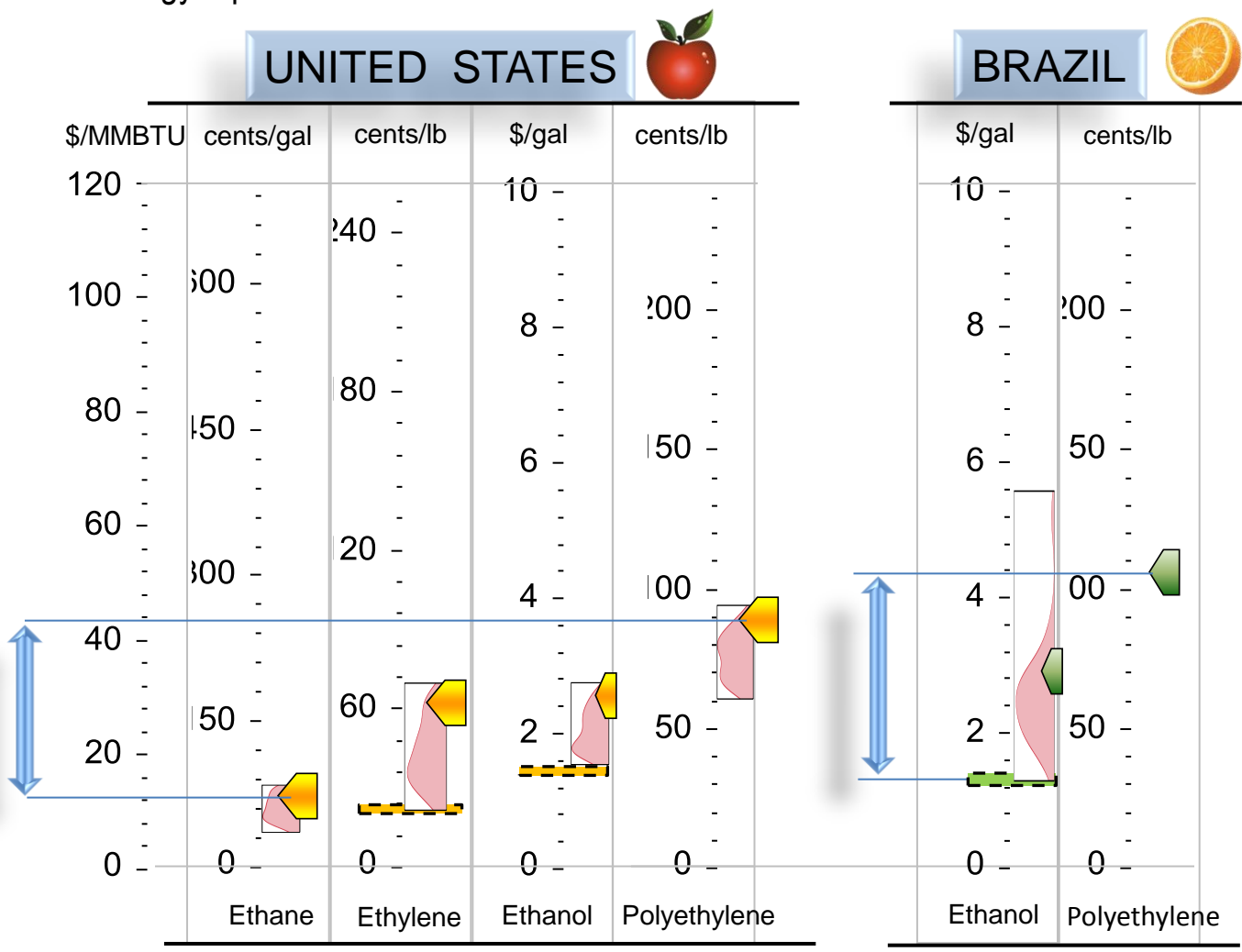
- Existing logistics for ethanol in Brazil
- High polyethylene price in Brazil
- Ethanol price fluctuation requires integration



Area required for produce ethanol to meet global PE production ~ 1x of Minnesota at Brazil cane productivity

Costs\*  
 --- USA --- Brazil

Market Prices  
 ◀ USA ▶ Brazil

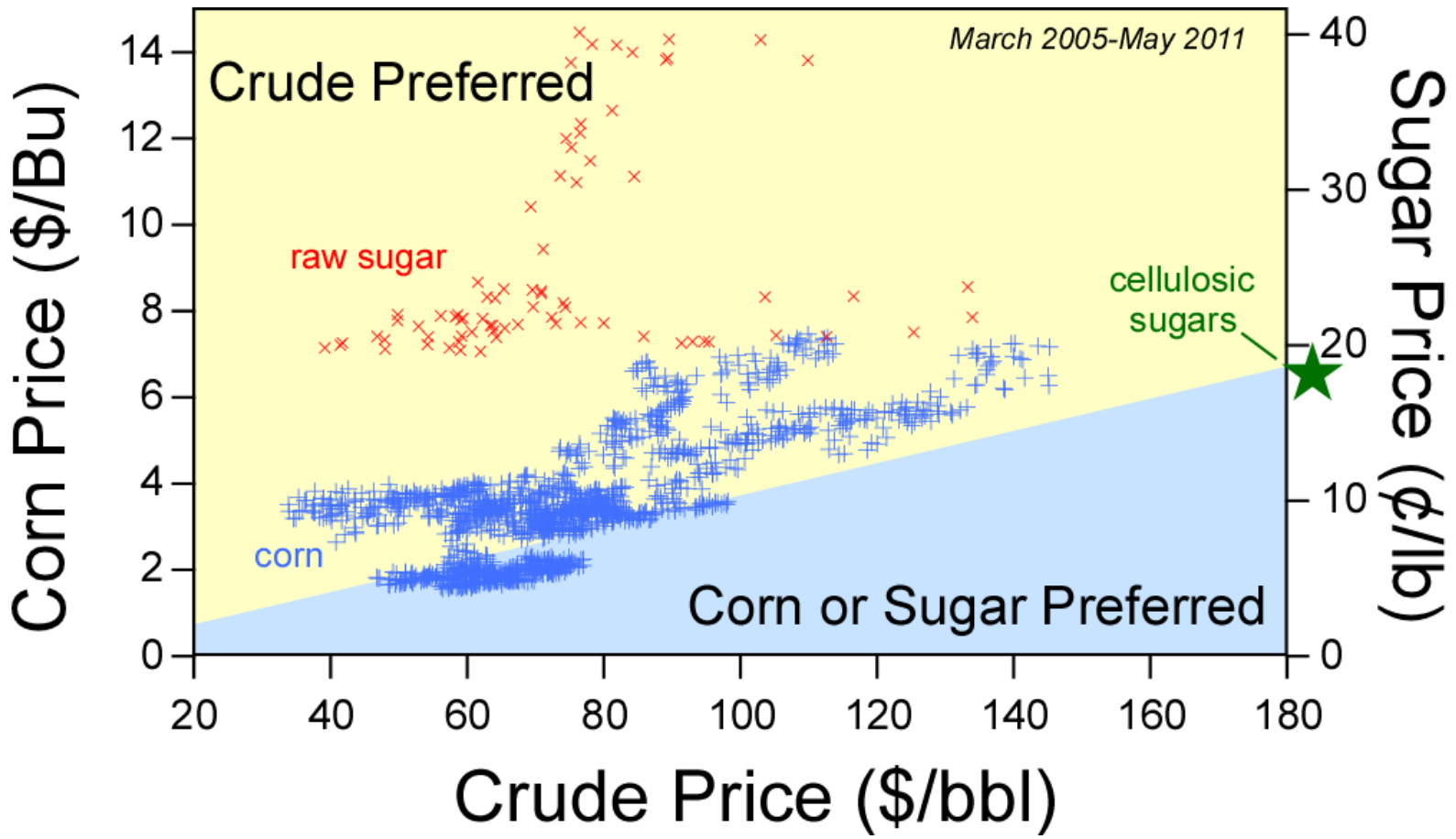


Sources: Ethane, ethylene, polyethylene (US): CMAI; Ethanol US: ICIS, Ethanol Br: ESALQ; PE Brazil calculated based on market price differential Br to US. Price Densities shown for June 2009 to June 2011; Prices shown from June 2011. \*Costs: 2009 US cash cost Ethylene CMAI, US EtOH cost to blender: SRI 2011; Br EtOH: Data Agro 2009 and Estado de S. Paulo 2007 adjusted to 2011 exchange rate



# Bio Commodities Too Expensive

Cash cost indifference analysis for ethylene from crude oil and bio feedstocks



\*Excludes Capital

# What are we doing?

R&D goal is to extract more earnings per dollar of investment

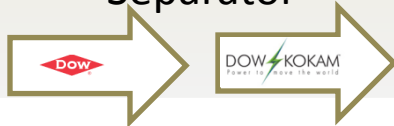


*Dow chooses to operate where materials science expertise drives success*

## Energy Storage

### Superior Materials:

Cathode  
Anode  
Electrolytes  
Separator



## Energy Efficiency

### Superior Materials:

Energy efficiency improvements for commercial and industrial products



## Energy Generation

### Superior Materials:

Efficiency  
Yield  
Performance  
Durability



# Final Thoughts



- Too much hype for the possible and not enough focus on the practical
  - **Incumbent fossil sources** set the standard for competition
  - It takes **decades** to deploy a new technology
  - Scale wins and biomass availability limits biofuels scale
- **Small companies access to capital makes success challenging**
- **Fundamental engineering judgment** is crucial to long term innovation
- Can society afford to pay for a different solution?

*Facts are the air of scientists. Without them you can never fly.*

*- Linus Pauling*



# Dow Supports Chemical Engineering



- \$250 million total program
- foster better balance
- 10 year program
- 11 major universities
- areas
  - catalysis
  - process development
  - new materials
    - electronics
    - energy
    - transportation
    - consumer applications



Dow Chemical says it will spend \$250 million over the next 10 years to support breakthrough chemical technologies at 11 major U.S. universities. The program will help significantly increase the number of chemical engineering Ph.D.s at the schools.

Announcing the program at an Oct. 4 investor day, Andrew N. Liveris said it will help relieve a shortage of graduates attracted to careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

## FUNDED UNIVERSITIES

- California Institute of Technology
- Carnegie Mellon University
- Georgia Institute of Technology
- Northwestern University
- Pennsylvania State University
- University of California, Berkeley
- UC Santa Barbara
- University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
- University of Michigan
- University of Minnesota
- University of Wisconsin



**Thank You**