

CASE STUDY - Aquaflow Bionomic Corporation – from pond scum to biodiesel

They're making what with pond scum?

That was the sort of reaction Trio Communications first encountered from media when we started talking to them about the world's first biodiesel to be developed from wild algae.

Very few of the general media had even heard of biodiesel let alone knew much about producing it from the wild algae that grows on the sewerage ponds in Marlborough.

So our challenge in early 2006 was to raise awareness of the process and its potential.

We had to educate the media in order to capture the imagination of potential investors both in New Zealand and internationally.

Aquaflow Bionomic Corporation (ABC) was a start-up with minimal marketing budget.

Trio Communications prepared key messages and a media campaign to announce Aquaflow's world-first achievement in producing samples of biodiesel made from wild algae. Targeted media selection and liaison with a few key journalists resulted in positive press and broadcast coverage both in New Zealand and internationally.

Further media releases built the Aquaflow story and in December 2006, Trio organised a major media event on the steps of Parliament in Wellington. The event saw the Minister of Energy David Parker and the

leader of the Green Party Jeanette Fitzsimons making the world's first trip in an Aquaflow algae-biodiesel powered Land Rover.

Media coverage was extensive. It included both TV1 and TV3, and a number of wire services which ensured the event was noted by international media. Then the brand really took off – a television documentary followed and international media began calling. Soon there were feature stories in such publications as North and South magazine and invitations for Aquaflow executives to speak at key industry events.

Trio also helped Aquaflow with its next major step, a bid to raise \$5 million in capital to fund further research. We prepared the advertising copy and media schedule and supporting media relations.

Aquaflow quickly raised the required \$5 million from New Zealand investors and a cornerstone investment from Pure Power Asia.

Aquaflow is now firmly on the biofuel map both in New Zealand and other major markets. It has attracted the interest of such major players as Virgin Fuels and others that must remain confidential at this stage.

Media – and much of the general public – no longer think making biofuel from algae is such a strange idea!