

## Based on Pilot Results, FBI Encourages Field Offices Nationwide to Purchase Biobased Tires

The Department of Defense (DoD) established the Sustainable Technology Evaluation and Demonstration (STED) Program to identify and demonstrate sustainable product alternatives capable of meeting requirements at DoD installations. The DoD STED mission is to validate the performance and cost-effectiveness of these alternatives—often collaborating with other Federal agencies—and increase awareness of sustainable alternatives. Such was the case when the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) tested the viability of new automotive tire technology containing domestic soybean oil rather than petroleum.

“Demonstrations in partnership with DoD STED allow us to explore products we think will support mission readiness and determine if they are cost effective,” explained Brooke Siegel, Sustainability Program Manager for the FBI. “Early on, we decided to focus on biobased tires since they were of interest to our automotive shops.”

The team evaluated four different Goodyear® tire models at the FBI Tactical Emergency Vehicle Operations Center (TEVOC) in Quantico, VA.

“Since TEVOC is where they train FBI new agents how to drive in specific conditions to keep them safe in the field, we knew conducting the pilot at TEVOC would add a degree of legitimacy to our results in the eyes of other FBI automotive technicians across the country,” she said.

“We provided both good and bad feedback to DoD STED. The biobased tires were found to perform better than or equal to traditional tires, with only a slight increase in price.”

Based on these results, Ms. Siegel developed the FBI Biobased Tire Buying Guide, which included a case study. This guidance document was distributed to all FBI field vehicle maintenance facilities across the U.S. to encourage automotive technicians to purchase biobased tires. The pilot approach also serves as a model for other Federal agencies.

“All of our folks are very mission focused, which means their concern is: Will this green product be as good as the traditional option? Pilots are an opportunity to show how a product can support the mission and determine whether it might

perform better or equal to the traditional product. We’ve found success in not forcing change on people and in letting them see results for themselves,” she said.

Ms. Siegel is now leading another pilot in collaboration with DoD STED to evaluate biobased sorbents. Used to absorb oil or toxic chemical spills, biobased sorbents offer both environmental and health benefits compared to non-biobased sorbents.

In honor of Ms. Siegel’s outstanding commitment to sustainable acquisition, the USDA BioPreferred® Program recognized her as a 2022 Excellence in Procurement Award winner.