

LanzaTech in Malaysian deal

CLAIRE ROGERS

New Zealand-born biotechnology star LanzaTech is teaming up with Malaysian state-owned petrol firm Petronas to produce sustainable chemicals from carbon dioxide and natural gas.

The deal adds to LanzaTech's list of high-profile partnerships, which already includes a venture with Baosteel, one of China's largest steel and iron makers, to produce ethanol, and a deal with Richard Branson's Virgin airline to produce jet fuel.

LanzaTech's technology uses bacteria to convert carbon monoxide in industrial waste gases and other gases into low-carbon fuels and chemicals.

The company will work with Petronas, already an investor in LanzaTech, to extend its technology to include gases containing carbon dioxide, such as refinery off-gases and from natural gas wells, to produce acetic acid.

Acetic acid is a chemical with applications in the plastics and polymers markets.

The international acetic acid market was worth about US\$4.5 billion (NZ\$5.5b), LanzaTech head Jennifer Holmgren said.

LanzaTech wanted to convert acetic acid to lipids - such as vegetable oils and algal oils - which could be converted to jet fuel, diesel and petrol, and for cosmetics and food. Fairfax NZ