

REUTERS

Japan Airlines plans Asia's first biofuel flight

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By Aiko Hayashi

TOKYO, June 23 (Reuters) - Japan Airlines Corp (9205.T: [Quote](#), [Profile](#), [Research](#), [Stock Buzz](#)) (JAL) said on Monday it planned to fly Asia's first commercial jet flight powered by biofuel before next March, as part of an international drive to reduce CO2 emissions from aviation.

For the passengerless flight, JAL will use a Boeing 747 aircraft with engines made by Pratt & Whitney, the jet engine unit of United Technologies Corp (UTX.N: [Quote](#), [Profile](#), [Research](#), [Stock Buzz](#)).

JAL will be the first Asian carrier to make such a flight and the fourth worldwide after British airline Virgin Atlantic [VA.UL], Air New Zealand (AIR.NZ: [Quote](#), [Profile](#), [Research](#), [Stock Buzz](#)) and Continental Airlines (CAL.N: [Quote](#), [Profile](#), [Research](#), [Stock Buzz](#)).

"I believe we can help promote the development of biofuels and contribute to the path for their practical use," JAL President and Chief Executive Haruka Nishimatsu told a news conference in Tokyo.

Soaring oil prices have also put airlines under pressure.

"It is problematic to depend on petroleum-based fuels also in terms of sustainability," Nishimatsu said.

JAL said details such as the source of the fuel and the route of the demonstration flight will be decided by August. Boeing has previously been looking at algae as a source of biofuel.

Last month, JAL said it needed to raise the surcharges its customers pay to help it absorb the sharp rise in the cost of jet fuel JET-SIN. (Reporting by Aiko Hayashi; Editing by Hugh Lawson)