

A WORD OF CAUTION ON ADDITIVES!

This is the transcript of an AA article published in Motor May 10th 1986.

The widely-advertised oil additive Slick 50 has been soundly slammed by the AA's Technical Services.

The AA claim that their tests show Slick 50 provides no fuel savings when it is added to a cars engine oil – and there is no evidence of any other benefits under normal operating conditions.

The AA have made no press or public announcement of their report, but have produced a leaflet for the benefit of any paid-up members who apply for one. An AA member on Motor's staff applied for a report in the normal way.

The report states that whilst there is no evidence the product will do harm to the engine, one good point is that most of it will be very rapidly removed by the oil filter. "At about £12 per treatment", say the AA, "it is a very expensive way of coating your oil filter element".

The AA performed tests by taking three identical cars and carefully running them in, splitting the driving equally among their test drivers. Oils were changed at 1500 miles, the cars were run a further 500 miles to stabilise the oils' viscosity, the cars' tuning was carefully checked and steady speed fuel consumptions and power outputs were measured.

The report says: "The procedure is so sensitive that, for instance, leaving the headlamps of the car switched on will make a nonsense of the results due to the extra drag of the charging system".

Engineers added Slick 50 to two of the cars in the recommended way at 3000 miles.

After a further 2000 miles, further dynamometer tests were carried out. "One car should show the sort of gradual change expected of a car in good condition" says the report, "whereas two should show a noticeable improvement . Here came the big disappointment. After our several months of careful testwork, we could not distinguish any difference between the three cars."

The AA claimed that all cars were performing well, but performance was remarkably consistent , within a few percent.

The AA say that a detailed examination of the claims made for the product will explain what happens when Slick 50 is added to an engine. Of one gallon of petrol burnt in an engine, says the report, some 60 percent of the energy will be lost as heat from the exhaust and cooling system. That leaves 40 percent and some 25 percent is used to drive the car and its accessories. The remaining 15 percent goes to losses such as pumping air into the engine (6 percent) and some 9 percent is lost as engine friction. Of that 9 percent, 6 percent is lost in churning the oil and only 3 percent of the total input goes into the sort of "boundary" friction that a solid lubricant could affect. "If tests of Slick 50 did show a 16 percent decrease in this friction, as claimed in current advertisements", says the report, "it would only affect the car's overall consumption by a half of one percent".

The AA also claim that their tests show there is no evidence that Slick 50 produces a surface layer on the engine wearing surfaces, let alone one that could last for 100,000 miles.

On questioning John Rowland, Silkolene/Fuchs Chief R&D Chemist for 40 years about additives, I received the following reply.

Quote:

The AA report encapsulates my opinion of Slick 50, it is an expensive way of blocking your oil filter, Believe me, it does precisely **nothing** beneficial. It has been proven time and time again that it just blocks oil filters and oilways.

For all other “magic” additives, most are based on 1930’s technology corrosive chlorinated paraffins. (synthetic anti-seize compounds originally made 70 years ago. They are cheap, toxic and corrosive. We use them in certain types of cutting oil!) Do not touch them with somebody else’s bargepole!

UCL’s on the other hand can be useful. After all, 2-strokes in effect run entirely on UCL. So.....the best UCL’s are 2-stroke oils! I always tell people to use a decent 2-stroke at 0.5% or 1%, because they are superior to the UCL’s sold as UCL’s if you get my drift. A litre of Super 2 Injector or Comp-2 will be better than a cupful of cheap mineral oil dyed red (no prizes for guessing the name) any day.

Vee engines (twins, to V8’s) benefit from UCL’s because the upper walls of the RH cylinder bank, looking from the front, always run dry. Think about it!

Unquote:

So, there you have it.