



Biodiesel's benefits in Europe

Raffaello Garofalo, Secretary General of the European Biodiesel Board details how biodiesel is the most viable solution to reduce emissions from transport...

Biofuels are the only sustainable and immediately commercially available alternative to fossil fuels. Liquid biofuels such as biodiesel can be used in all diesel vehicles at an inclusion rate of 10% or higher. Biodiesel is currently the most viable European solution to reduce emissions from transport.

Conventional biodiesel can largely save more than 50% of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Biodiesel from agricultural biomass improves its GHG emissions saving profile thanks to a number of developments concerning the production process and the agricultural land management. Both policymakers and public opinion need to realise that crop diversification is highly beneficial for the soil and for limiting pest and disease risks.

At the same time, recent figures confirm a rise in advanced biodiesel, in comparison to biofuels made from other feed stocks. Advanced biodiesel made from

waste oils, such as used cooking oil (UCOME), residues of animal fats (TME) and sewage oils can even entail GHG emissions savings up to 95% when compared to conventional fossil diesel. According to a recent study performed by the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research (IFEU), in Heidelberg, biodiesel made from waste and residues can save at least 85% of GHG emissions compared to fossil diesel fuels.

Europe has the infrastructure, the producers and the possibility to fight climate change and to achieve energy independence. Biodiesel has a crucial role to play improving the future transport energy supply of Europe. The role of biodiesel is potentially very important; however, the lack of a stable legislative frame is hampering its further development. Reliable targets and support schemes are needed in order to support the will of investors to continue developing this sector.

Specific targets for 2030 would restore investors' confidence and support the deployment of a sustainable and advanced alternative to diesel. Biofuels are the only sector abiding by strict sustainability criteria. Should the current framework be abandoned, it would simply erase the efforts made by the industry so far.

Biodiesel in Europe represents the main alternative to fossil fuels in transport. Since the publication of European directives, the biodiesel industry has been extremely successful in ensuring that the 10% target of use of renewable energy in transportation would be met. EBB also promotes the use of biodiesel in heavy duty vehicles as well as aviation not only on a European level, but also on a global scale.

Transport emissions are rapidly rising – now accounting for more than 25% of EU total greenhouse gas emissions – they are projected to become the largest source of CO₂ emissions by 2020. Aviation is the fastest growing transport modality worldwide with an estimated growth of 4.5% annually up to 2050.

Considering that the aviation sector is responsible for at least 2% of the global manmade greenhouse gas emissions, the so-called “bio-jet” will have an increasing role in climate change mitigation.

Aviation biofuel can play a safe and effective role in the world's transport system. Lifecycle analysis confirmed that sustainably produced biofuels reduce carbon emission by 50 to 80%, compared to petroleum, and should play a key role in supporting aviation's growth while meeting environmental goals.

EBB members offer EU – made products, reducing greenhouse gases up to 85% compared to diesel. Europe can make the choice of promoting both European growth and employment by playing a leading role in tackling climate change adverse effects.

The biodiesel industry should push forward the discussion about the benefits of biodiesel in the post-2020 climate and energy framework. Despite the fact that the biodiesel industry lacks confidence in its future and in EU institutions, it keeps making investments in innovation and sustainability in line with EU policies' developments. A robust biodiesel industry creates high-skilled jobs, while helping to reduce EU dependence on foreign oil.



Biodiesel creates and maintains green jobs in a wide range of sectors. In addition to environmental concerns, Europe faces an energy security gap, triggered by a high dependence on fossil fuels imports and particularly diesel from third countries. Biofuels account for nearly 220,000 jobs in Europe, proudly supporting Europe's green economy. In addition to reducing Europe's imports of fossil fuels and animal feed, biodiesel's main by-product – glycerine – replaces harmful chemicals in food, pharmaceutical or cosmetics industries.

Being the only viable possibility to reduce EU's future GHG emissions and therefore lay the fundamentals for sustainable road and aviation transport, the EU biodiesel industry wishes to become part of a real solution to the problems the EU transport sector faces today. ■

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Adjacent Government - August 2015