

EU – Italian customs blocks fraudulent bio-diesel import

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Kingsman

According to a press release from the European Biodiesel Board (EBB), Italian Customs authorities seized 10,000 mt of bio-diesel in the Port of Venice last week, which was declared as Canadian origin but is presumed to be US B99. The product which was loaded in the port of Quebec, would have been offered at a US\$150-180/mt discount compared to EU biodiesel of comparable quality.

This operation, as carried out by the Custom authorities of the port of Venice was validated by an Italian judge. The load was declared as Canadian origin, but strong evidences indicate that it instead originates from the Unites States of America where it benefited from the US illegal subsidies. This comes after the EBB raised the attention of EU authorities and EU Customs on the fact that EU duties on US bio-diesel are being circumvented, either via triangular trade through various countries or via blends such as B19 which are imported in Europe. In 2009, Canadian exports of bio-diesel to Europe rose to around 140,000 mt versus 1,700 mt in 2008.

A new report by the UK's Defra concludes that bio-fuel was not to blame for the so-called food crisis of 2007-2008, a release by the GRFA reports. Defra said that all available evidence suggests that biofuels

had a relatively small contribution to the 2008 spike in agricultural commodity prices. "Whilst commodity prices have fallen steeply from their peaks in 2008 bio-fuel demand has remained steady – indicating that the causal link from bio-fuel demand to short-term crop prices is still relatively weak." Instead, the report found that oil prices played a significant role in driving agricultural costs up, and said that studies which have found a large bio-fuel impact across agricultural commodities have often considered too few variables, relied on statistical associations or made unrealistic or inconsistent assumptions.

The European farming body, Copa-Cogeca, has welcomed the new EU study, which highlights the benefits of bio-fuels in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, TheBioenergySite News reports.

The report by the International Food Research Policy Institute (IFPRI) titled "Global Trade and Environmental Impact of the EU Biofuels Mandate" was commissioned by the EU Commission.

Speaking in Brussels, Copa-Cogeca Secretary-General said: "The study confirms the positive emission reduction effects of bio-fuels. Copa-Cogeca has been emphasising their benefits for sometime now.

"The study reveals that an increase in demand for the raw materials used to produce biofuels in the EU from now until 2020 will only cause a slight rise in the use of arable land of between 0.07% to 0.08%." "The EU's policy to promote the use of bio-fuels will consequently have little effect on land use on an international scale but this impact could nevertheless be accentuated if trade in bio-fuels is liberalised further. That is why imports to the EU must be governed by specific rules."

Wonders of Waste is a car rally, from Rotterdam to Rome, where all participants drive only on used cooking oil, Gave News reports. The oil is unprocessed, unfiltered, and comes directly from the frying pans at snackbars, hotels or restaurants. The vehicles can drive around 300-400 km on this initial oil.

After this, participants have to stop at restaurants, motels, hotels, snackbars etc. along the route and arrange for more fuel. According to the rally's co-organiser, this leads to further awareness of reusing waste, for example as bio-fuels. He indicated that companies either dump the oil into the sewers or have to pay someone to take it away.