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Biocarburanti, da Strasburgo ok alle nuove regole. Ma le Ong restano critiche – eunews	2
Biofuels Face Uncertainty in Europe – Wall Street Journal	4
EU votes for 6 percent cap on first-generation biofuels – Biodiesel Mag	6
Looming EU vote draws first battle lines in renewed biofuel debate - Platts.....	10
Food price fears push EU lawmakers to put a lid on biofuels growth - Euractiv	13
MEPs split ahead of vote on biofuel targets – European Voice	17
Industry-backed study finds significantly lower emissions from biodiesel, Governors' Biofuels Coalition	18
Food price, ILUC studies released in run-up to EU biofuel vote, Ethanol Producer.....	20
New Study Finds Less Land Use Change for Biofuels, Biofuels International	22
Biocarburanti: studio, Ue riveda modelli scientifici, ANSA	23
New study challenges climate impact of biofuels, Europolitics.....	24
EU biodiesel industry issues ILUC counter-study, Ends Europe	26
Biodiesel Sector fights back on ILUC estimates on biofuels, Bulletin Quotidien.....	27
Land use changes: new study faces the EU commission on biofuels, Bioenergy Crops	28
Biodiesel Board Calls for Consistent Biofuels Policies – Bioenergy Site	29
Europe Takes Another Step Toward Capping First-Generation Biofuels – Renewable Energy World....	30

Biocarburanti, da Strasburgo ok alle nuove regole. Ma le Ong restano critiche – eunews

www.eunews.it, September 13th, 2013

Per la relatrice Lepage si tratta di una vittoria contro lobby che hanno fatto “pressioni indecenti”. Greenpeace: “Voto incoerente”, ActionAid: “Traditi i poveri del mondo”

Dietro numeri, percentuali tecniche e sigle ostiche, si nasconde un messaggio importante: il Parlamento europeo sostiene la transizione verso biocarburanti più sostenibili, senza farsi piegare dalle pressioni delle lobby. Così la relatrice Corinne Lepage (Alde) legge il voto con cui oggi l'aula di Strasburgo ha approvato le nuove regole in materia: “Non ce l'hanno fatta, in questo campo le lobby non hanno vinto”, dichiara soddisfatta dopo il voto: “E' stato un dibattito molto difficile perché gli interessi economici hanno pesato molto”.

In ogni caso con questo voto (356 voti favorevoli, 327 contrari e 14 astenuti) qualche risultato è arrivato. Primo tra tutti, il tetto imposto all'utilizzo di biocarburanti di prima generazione, quelli cioè realizzati a partire da prodotti alimentari, come colza, olio di palma, soia, oleaginose (biodiesel), cereali, canna da zucchero, barbabietole da zucchero (etanolo). L'Ue si è data l'ambizioso obiettivo di arrivare al 2020 avendo sostituito il 10% delle fonti fossili con rinnovabili nel settore trasporti. Su questo 10%, stabilisce ora il Parlamento europeo, soltanto il 6% potrà essere costituito da biocarburanti di prima generazione. Una percentuale più alta del limite al 5% proposto dalla Commissione europea, ma necessario, spiega Lepage, per spuntare un accordo con la commissione Industria. “Non è una cifra ambiziosa e soddisfacente” ammette la relatrice, “perché i biocarburanti di prima generazione ci costano dai 6 ai 7 miliardi e perché gli effetti sull'ambiente, penso soprattutto all'olio di palma, sono più che aleatori. Senza contare quelli sui prezzi alimentari”. Ma per il momento era impossibile fare di più.

Altro punto del progetto di legge appena approvato dall'Aula, riguarda il cosiddetto fattori Iluc (Indirect Land Use Change): le emissioni indirette legate al cambio di destinazione d'uso dei terreni agricoli per la produzione dei biocarburanti. L'espansione della superficie coltivata, a scapito di foreste e terreni ricchi di carbonio, porta all'aumento di emissioni di gas a effetto serra. Fino ad ora la Commissione europea rifiutava di prendere in considerazione queste emissioni, ancora difficili da conteggiare con precisione. Il parlamento Europeo oggi chiede invece che dal 2020 anche Iluc sia tenuto in conto, anche se con una maggioranza risicata.

“Il risultato piuttosto risicato visto oggi dimostra che il dubbio persiste nell'utilizzare una disciplina piuttosto giovane per la definizione di queste politiche” ha dichiarato Raffaello Garofalo, Segretario Generale dell'European Biodiesel Board. Per Garofalo “l'Europa non può permettersi di minacciare quasi 220mila posti di lavoro basandosi su semplicistiche ipotesi Iluc”.

Ad ogni modo i tempi sono lunghi, più di quanto la relatrice sperasse e più di quanto avesse chiesto la commissione Ambiente del Parlamento, ma anche in questo caso una mediazione è stata necessaria. Per incentivare il passaggio a biocarburanti di seconda generazione, quelli ottenuti da alghe o da alcuni tipi di rifiuti, il Parlamento europeo inserisce anche un sub-target. Entro il 2020, almeno il 2,5% del consumo di energia nel settore trasporti dovrà arrivare da biocarburanti avanzati.

“Si tratta di un segnale forte per andare avanti lungo questa strada e esercitare pressione sul Consiglio” sottolinea Lepage, rammaricandosi però di un risultato: per due voti di scarto la relatrice

non ha ottenuto un mandato per negoziare un accordo in prima lettura con il Consiglio. Spetta dunque ora agli Stati membri adottare una posizione comune. Se questa sarà diversa dalla posizione del Parlamento, si andrà in seconda lettura. In questo modo i tempi si allungano e “c'è il rischio che la cosa non riesca a tornare al Parlamento prima della fine del mandato”, avverte Lepage: “Tutto ciò sarà controproducente per l'industria – è convinta – chi dice di difenderla in realtà fa il contrario perché l'incertezza è un fattore di mancato investimento”. Ma la partita, contro “lobby che hanno esercitato una pressione indecente”, non era vinta in partenza e il risultato per la relatrice è in sostanza positivo.

Non dello stesso avviso le associazioni ambientaliste e umanitarie, secondo cui si poteva fare decisamente di più. “Quello di oggi è un voto incoerente – accusa Sebastien Risse, direttore della campagna foreste di Greenpeace Europa, secondo cui il Parlamento – vuole riconoscere che i biocarburanti ottenuti da coltivazioni alimentari sono distruttivi per l'ambiente e allo stesso tempo continuare a sostenerli politicamente e finanziariamente”.

Ancora più critica ActionAid: secondo Nuria Molina, direttore delle politiche e delle campagne dell'associazione “questo voto è una grossa delusione per i milioni di persone che soffrono la fame a causa del land grabbing e dell'aumento dei prezzi del cibo. Gli eurodeputati hanno voltato le spalle ai poveri del mondo e ai loro elettori, continuando ad incoraggiare l'uso del cibo per la produzione di carburanti”.

Biofuels Face Uncertainty in Europe – Wall Street Journal

online.wsj.com ; September 11th, 2013

The European Parliament voted Wednesday to limit the use of biofuels in the European Union, one of a series of potential changes to the bloc's climate-change policies that investors say are creating uncertainty and bottling up energy investments

The Parliament approved a proposal to limit the share of food-based biofuels in cars and trucks to 6% of total consumption by 2020. This means that to meet its target of having 10% of Europe's transport energy come from renewable sources by then, the EU would have to rely on a much-faster expansion of electric cars and commercially unproven biofuels made from nonfood crops.

The decision—which must still be approved by EU governments before it can take effect—would represent a turn away from 4-year-old rules meant to encourage the use of biofuels, a general term for gasoline and diesel substitutes derived from plant matter.

Such fuels are increasingly seen by experts, including at the European Commission, as diverting farm production away from food crops, thus potentially driving up food prices.

The debate over biofuels comes at a time when Europe's economic weakness has trumped global warming as a top concern for policy makers, leading to an uncertainty that investors say has made them hesitant to invest in longer-term projects.

"We need a clear and stable energy-policy framework or else power-sector investment will dry up," said Craig Mackenzie, investment director and head of sustainability at the U.K. life-insurance and pension firm Scottish Widows Investment Partners.

The EU's flagship climate-change program, the Emissions Trading System, a market in which European companies trade rights to produce carbon dioxide, has seen prices collapse in recent years, thus offering little incentive for polluters to embark on expensive efforts to reduce emissions.

Later this year, the European Commission—the EU's executive—is expected to propose that the bloc significantly scale back its ambitions in the area of climate change.

Current policy for 2020 includes pledges to reduce carbon-dioxide emissions to 20% below 1990 levels. Targets established for 2050 aim for CO₂ emissions at least 80% below 1990 levels, as well as nearly eliminate emissions from the electricity sector.

The commission will lay out plans for how Europe should reach these targets, laying out goals for 2030 for reducing greenhouse gases, boosting renewable energy, and cutting total energy consumption.

Those proposals could have great influence over how Europe generates its power during the next decade. But one major question will be whether to make the 2030 targets mandatory or merely recommendations.

Günther Oettinger, the EU energy commissioner, has said there is no longer the same political consensus on combatting climate change as there was in the relative boom year of 2007, when the 2020 legislation was passed.

The EU's energy policies officially shifted in May to take more account of economic considerations. EU leaders approved proposals aimed at keeping EU businesses competitive by addressing high energy prices, which some companies have said could force them to move operations abroad.

The International Energy Agency, based in Paris, in June declared uncertainty related to renewable energy policies in Europe to be "public enemy No. 1" for investors.

A new proposal is also expected to emerge this fall to try to fix the carbon-trading market, which started in 2005. An oversupply of permits has limited the market's utility and seen prices for emitting a ton of carbon drop to around €5 (\$6.65) from more than €30 in 2008.

The biofuels debate was "very difficult," said Corinne Lepage, the lawmaker who had been driving the legislation, adding that because the vote was so close, industry still would not have "certainty regarding its investments."

The European Biodiesel Board, representing producers, said industry should not be punished based on "inconclusive science."

The ultimate place for biofuels in EU policy remains uncertain. The decision could spur development of so-called second-generation biofuels, which move away from food crops.

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development advocated in March the use of fuels made from agricultural waste such as straw and manure. Growing nonfood plants such as grasses, and harvesting algae from water, are also possible.

Negotiations with European governments over the biofuels ceiling will now ensue. If a common position isn't agreed on, the issue will go back to the Parliament.

The EU climate-change proposals are officially the responsibility of the commission's departments of energy and climate change, which themselves don't always see eye to eye.

But the weak economy has increased the influence wielded by Olli Rehn, the economics commissioner, and Joaquin Almunia, who heads the bloc's antitrust unit. Both have argued that the commission's proposals shouldn't undercut the region's economic competitiveness, according to EU officials.

Some groups, including energy-intensive industries, argue that strict climate targets for 2030 would increase energy costs and become a drag on growth. Environmental groups say that a lack of binding targets will allow fossil fuels to remain the dominant source of energy, making it harder to meet the EU's 2050 targets.

Not all industries oppose climate regulation. Some companies would stand to benefit. For instance, the insulation industry says strict efficiency targets would tackle EU's climate goals, while boosting jobs and economic output.

Barry Lynham, group director of strategy and communication at Knauf Insulation, said that EU laws requiring building upgrades would "fundamentally change our perspective," and could lead his company to build new factories in the region.

"Insulation is very driven by regulatory environments," Mr. Lynham said. Knauf is active in 35 countries and the biggest insulation firm in the U.K.

EU votes for 6 percent cap on first-generation biofuels – Biodiesel Mag

www.biodieselmagazine.com, September 12th, 2012

In a much-anticipated vote today, the EU Parliament plenary decision on where to cap first-generation biofuels in Europe's Renewable Energy Directive came down to a narrow agreement of 6 percent. This cap is lower than the biofuels industries pushed for, and higher than anti-biofuel lobbies desired.

Nuria Molina, director of policy and campaigns for ActionAid, one of the many organizations in support of a lower cap on EU first-generation biofuels, had this to say about the vote, and where the next battleground in this war will be fought.

"The baton now passes to the UK government, which must fight in within Europe to make sure the cap on biofuels is as low as possible, and no higher than 5 percent. A UK position of anything higher would be a failure to live up to David Cameron's promise made at this summer's G8 to tackle global hunger."

ActionAid's Sept. 11 press release goes on to say:

"MEPs were voting to cap the amount of land-based and food-based biofuels used in transport fuel. In October, the European Commission proposed a cap of 5 percent on the amount of food that can be used to meet the overall 10 percent target for renewable energy in transport by 2020. This proposal was welcomed by development and green groups as a first step in the right direction to control the promotion of the first-generation biofuels industry. But wrangling in the European Parliament led to a watering down of the Commission's limitation, particularly by the industry committee, which had proposed a 6.5 percent cap."

Regarding an advanced biofuels subtarget in the vote, today the European Biodiesel Board said the European Parliament provided a schizophrenic proposal maintaining present double-counting support but excluding used cooking oil and animal fats from the 2.5 percent specific target allocated to advanced biofuels. Click [here](#) to read EBB's full statement on today's plenary vote.

In the days and weeks leading up to the important vote, the EBB had been very vocal in its stance on the cap, indirect land use change and misinformation being spread about palm oil for biodiesel use in the EU. Early this month, the organization touted a new U.S. study showing ILUC factors are 95 percent lower than previously estimated. Three days later, the EBB released its updated position on the legislative proposal up for vote. Following that, the EBB set the record straight on palm oil use for biodiesel in the EU, and from where the real demand comes.

First, let's look at the EBB's updated position.

EBB, representing the voice of the EU biodiesel industry, intends to express its views in the light of the progress achieved by the European Parliament and the Council of the EU as a result of negotiations on the Commission legislative proposal on ILUC.

As a preliminary remark EBB stresses that EU policies in the field of biofuels need to be consistent. We strongly believe that, without a thorough rethink, the texts discussed nowadays would still strongly undermine investor's confidence in alternative biodiesel. Investment triggered so far by the EU needs to be guaranteed as a matter of fair and wise EU industrial policy (especially in time of economic crisis) with grandfathering clauses. But this is not enough: if Europe seriously wants to keep employment in the sector and boost investment in improved biofuels we need to avoid any unreasonable U-turn on present support for existing single or double-counting biofuels operations and especially we need to establish a solid post-2020 frame.

More specifically the EBB intends to raise the attention of EU stakeholders on the following points:

ILUC factors are confirmed as an unsteady and inappropriate tool for policy making

ILUC factors are not an appropriate tool to ascertain fair and proportionate EU energy or biofuels policy. There are neither scientific proofs nor empirical verifications of the measurement of ILUC. Conceptual and measuring inconsistencies of the IFPRI study have been largely proven in the press and in scientific literature: the two very recent French INRA and US GTAP studies show ILUC figures lower by 50 percent and 95 percent (down to 2,33 grams for rapeseed biodiesel). To impose ILUC factors, even for reporting, to biodiesel based on completely inconsistent figures coming from present academic studies would have only a counterproductive effect diminishing trust and research in alternative biodiesel production pathways.

EBB therefore strongly opposes any legislative mention of unsteady ILUC figures or factors in the new Directive, even for reporting purposes, while supporting efficient horizontal ILUC mitigation actions—this would be consistent also with the very latest Commission proposal on biomass for heating and cooling, which implicitly rethink the overall Commission ILUC approach not including any mention to ILUC factors in new legislation.

Any cap for conventional biofuels should not be lower than 7 percent

The limitation to 5 percent for agriculture-based biofuels appears as an excessive move. Major EU countries already reached percentages of incorporation beyond 7 or 8 percent. EBB considers that a capping of conventional biofuels could not be acceptable at a percentage lower than 7 percent: the Lithuanian Presidency 7 percent proposal should be considered as a minimum. A lower level would undermine investment made until, would entail heavy job losses and would reduce global food and feed availability triggered by the production of rape and oilseeds for biodiesel (since feed/food proteins—60 to 75 percent of oilseeds weight—are biodiesel production chain coproducts).

Harmonized criteria for the definition of advanced biofuels need to be established

A harmonized definition of advanced biofuels should be based on the criteria highlighted by the European Sustainable Biofuels Forum (ESBF) definition, i.e.:

ESBF Common complementary criteria to qualify as advanced biofuels:

- (1) Having low carbon dioxide emission or high GHG reduction*
- (2) High sustainability*
- (3) Lignocellulosic biomass, municipal or industrial waste, sludge, residue streams or process by-products, algae, micro-organisms*

UCOME and TME are advanced biofuels

Used cooking oils and tallow based biodiesel have exceptional GHG and sustainability performances and are exclusively produced from waste and residues. These products are today the main advanced biofuels available in Europe and there would be no justification to exclude them from the advanced biofuels list.

Waste and residue biofuels must count double towards the 10 percent target

Without double counting, production of TME and UCOME would be unviable, leading to the closure of many specialist waste-based biodiesel plants. No further investment could take place without the support of double-counting. Any withdrawal of the existing established double-counting support would not be justifiable in the frame of a Directive establishing further support for advanced biofuels.

Use of advanced fuels should be no less than 3 percent by 2020

A subtarget for advanced of at least 3 percent including, among others, TME and UCOME, would encourage development of new sustainable biofuels and grow the use of existing ones. The EBB is not opposed that within this subtarget, special segments or measures are reserved, in priority, to new, more costly pathways, provided that such priority does not exclude or hamper advanced biofuels being deployed today.

No quadruple counting—prudence is needed on waste hierarchy

Triple, quadruple counting or beyond are excessive. They will have unknown impact on the entire biofuels sector and on investments, still creating huge market distortions and especially risking to be perceived by the public opinion as an accounting trick used to shrink actual targets. Also, any use of waste hierarchy must not reduce the availability of wastes and residues for biofuels. If this was to happen all effort would be vain and investment in waste and residue biofuels will disappear.

A subtarget for renewable electricity (especially in rail) would be an unacceptable policy deviation

EBB strongly opposes the definition of a subtarget for renewable electricity in transport and especially in rail. The use of electricity in rail has been widely developed in last century and rewarding it nowadays would be a seedy attempt to find a pretext to cut the biofuels targets, while giving an ex-post incentive to last century old technologies. It is not unnecessary to remind that contrary to biofuels, electricity is an energy carrier and not an energy source and that the share of renewable electricity in transport could never be measured if cars are charged (as normal) from plugs.

Incentives for advanced biofuels should be appropriately certified with an EU single system to avoid frauds

All extra-incentives in favor of biofuels from waste and residues should be aligned with well-established certification schemes such as the *RBO (Register on Biofuels Origination)* to avoid frauds and untrustworthy declarations. The RBO is a system promoted by EU biofuels stakeholders that utilizes an extra certification level and a single European register to create reliable and safe method for trading of waste and residue biofuels. EBB supports EP ENVI committee amendments in this sense, with the necessary addition of specifying that we need a single EU scheme: only this will eliminates fraudulent trading based on multiple schemes declarations and prevent uncertified feedstock and biofuel from entering the EU from non-EU countries.

Retain a single target for biofuels; not a split version for biodiesel/ethanol/biogas/bio-butanol/ etc.

Biofuels target need to remain elastic enough to respond to fuel demand evolution and to the expected further increase of diesel use in Europe. A split target (on gasoline for instance) would add significant complication to the use of renewable fuels by member states and obligated fuel companies resulting in added costs to fuel consumers across Europe.

Biodiesel strongly contributes to diminish European long-term deficits in proteins and diesel supply

As highlighted above, biodiesel is synonym of EU internal production of food/feed proteins. Also, Europe imports more than 30 million tons/year of diesel, most of which from Russia. European biodiesel production balances such deficits and strongly contributes to EU energy independence and security of supply. These EU deficits would be negatively affected by the reduction of planned support to biodiesel production. This makes biodiesel one of those genuine EU biofuels which should be supported in priority.

Three days prior to releasing its updated position, EBB published a press release on the new U.S. study from Air Improvement Resource, (S&T) squared and the University of Illinois Chicago, which reveals ILUC values up to 95 percent lower than previous estimates. Here's a portion of EBB's release:

Economic modeling applied to bioenergy has been heavily questioned in the last months. With successive reports proposing improvements in assumptions, the indirect land use change (ILUC) estimates on biofuels have decreased sharply.

In June 2013, the French National Institute for Agricultural Research (INRA) concluded in an 80 percent reduction of indirect emissions, with a value for biodiesel of 10gCO₂eq/MJ. The French research centers conclude that current ILUC models use lower values for increasing yields than actual observed data trends.

The new U.S. study Land Use Change Greenhouse Gas emissions of European Biofuel Policies Utilizing the Global Trade Analysis Project (GTAP) evaluates land use changes for several biofuels pathways and policies. "This work has found that ILUC calculated using the latest version of GTAP are much less than those calculated by IFPRI in 2011," said Steffen Mueller from University of Illinois.

It concludes that biodiesel could account for as little as 2,33gCO₂eq/MJ, compared to current 55gCO₂eq/MJ allocated in a Commission proposal amending biofuels policy. This represent a 95 percent difference mainly due to improved understanding as regards land use, crop yields and forest use in the EU, Canada and the U.S. (where the forest continuously increases in the last decades). Suggestions for further improvements are also provided like regionalization of the analysis and crop specificity of yield.

The divergence of results due to a slight change in assumptions, once again, opens the floor to question the validity of ILUC science for policy making. "Policy makers can no longer deny the immaturity of science to serve for policy making," said Raffaello Garofalo, EBB Secretary General. Just two days ago, the EBB set the record straight about palm oil use for biodiesel in the EU.

The European Biodiesel Board, representing the European biodiesel industry, would like to comment on the "timely" International Institute for Sustainable Development research paper that has been "prepared for, and with the funding of, Friends of the Earth Europe."

First of all, EBB is very surprised that this quite clearly green, NGO-driven and "[European Parliament] plenary timed" report has been realized with the acknowledged contribution of David Laborde, International Food Policy Research Institute, the author of the famous IFPRI study, still used as exclusive legislative reference by the commission indirect land use change (ILUC) proposal. This scientific contribution in such context is not without raising few legitimate general questions of scientific neutrality. Second, the report comes to a very simplistic and thus approximate conclusion, highlighting that the more biodiesel is produced in Europe, the more palm oil risks to be used.

Targeting only such simplistic analysis, the report, however, forgets to highlight that:

- Biodiesel is only responsible for a very marginal part of palm oil demand (maximum 10 to 13 percent), which is imported under stringent EU sustainability rules

- The "remaining" 85 to 90 percent of palm oil imports in Europe are due to food (such as biscuits, spreads, pastries, etc.) and/or oleochemical uses, which are imported without any EU sustainability rule

- The European biodiesel Industry has filed a complaint in order to close the EU biodiesel markets to Indonesian biodiesel imports. Such complaint has been filed for antidumping and antisubsidy, since Indonesian unfair biodiesel exports are damaging the EU industry and EU markets.

In this context, it appears really difficult to blame the EU biodiesel industry for any unfair or unsustainable palm oil use. A fortiori to penalize the EU biodiesel industry, in this context or based on the IISD report, would be even more detrimental.

Looming EU vote draws first battle lines in renewed biofuel debate - Platts

blogs.platts.com, September 10th, 2013

Since the European Commission first proposed a number of changes to the European Union's Renewable Energy Directive (RED) last October, both sides of the biofuel debate in Europe have battled their corners ahead of what are likely to be key changes to legislation for the regional and indeed global biofuel landscapes, up to the year 2020 and beyond.

A plenary vote, scheduled for September 11, will see the European Parliament agree on its position on several key components of renewables laws, before heading into three-way negotiations with the Council of Ministers and the EC.

Ahead of the vote, industry bodies, non-governmental organizations and other interested parties have pushed hard to air their points of view on a subject that has wide-reaching economic, environmental and social implications.

Both the lead Environment Committee and the Industry and Energy committee have already laid out their positions, with differences arising on three key points: a cap on conventional, first-generation biofuels; mandated targets for advanced biofuels and the definition of such fuels; finally and most controversially, the reporting and measuring of emissions related to Indirect Land Usage Change (ILUC), which are GHGs caused by the shift of land usage toward new crop-land as a result of the effect of biofuels on food prices.

The EC's October proposal said that conventional biofuels should be limited to 5% of road transport fuel by energy content out of an overall 10% target and that ILUC factors should be reported but not included in emissions calculations. The proposal was met with howls of protest from investors, who complained that the new targets will hurt existing investments made on the back of the initial legislation. As well as this, they said, how could further R&D and capital investments into advanced biofuels be made, when the authorities are so readily willing to move the legislative goalposts?

The Environmental committee called for a 5.5% cap on conventional biofuels and for a 2% target from each of advanced biofuels and renewable energy. In addition, they said that ILUC should be fully included in emissions calculations. In contrast, the Industry and Energy committee proposed a 6.5% cap and a 2.5% target for advanced biofuels that doesn't allow for multiple counting of certain feedstocks and so was effectively more than double that asked for by the Environmental committee. They also said that ILUC should be left out of legislation until the models used to calculate emissions are more scientifically robust.

Those championing environmental and social causes have been loudest in calling for ILUC emissions to be included directly in emissions calculations. They cite widespread deforestation and negative economic impacts for the poor in Indonesia and South America, as well as parts of Africa. It's an emotional subject for some and representatives of NGOs from Indonesia and Sierra Leone were present at the Parliament in person on Wednesday to talk about how they perceived European renewables laws had affected some of the world's most vulnerable people. Posters sponsored by ActionAid, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace and Oxfam adorned nearly every lamppost in streets bordering the parliament, asking MEPs to vote 'No food for fuel'.

If ILUC emissions were included, first-generation biofuels could become nonviable due to the 2009 Fuel Quality Directive's (FQD) requirement for a 6% drop in road transport fuel emissions by 2020, as well as the German government's 2015 switch to accounting for biofuel use by carbon savings rather than energy content. In fact, the EC's proposal said that the FQD should be made stricter, in order to

gain lower emissions and discourage “further investments in installations with low greenhouse gas performance.”

While European biofuel producers are understandably worried, the potential effects are further-reaching. The EU has been a key market for biofuels from the US, Indonesia and Argentina in recent years, punitive trade tariffs notwithstanding. An ILUC factor in particular would be likely to completely rule out imports of biodiesel from all three countries, if it was implemented to the degree that some are calling for.

The US, which has seen exploding RINs prices this year send the cost of biofuels there to sky-high levels, has already seen more biodiesel arrive from Europe, with EPA registered producers able to obtain RINs from animal-tallow based TME or standard biodiesel from plants which are old enough to benefit from grandfathering clauses. US Energy Information Administration numbers showed that June biodiesel imports spiked to 28.6 million gallons in June, up 12 million gallons from the previous month, with Indonesia sending nearly 11 million gallons, Argentina 5.25 million gallons and Germany alone within the EU sending more than 6.8 million gallons.

Market penetration of biofuels in Europe is currently between 5% and 7%, so a cap around those levels would not necessarily drive product out of Europe. But if the introduction of ILUC emissions made sales in Europe nonviable due to the FQD then increased shipments across the Atlantic could take place.

In the broad sense, all parties are in agreement that ILUC exists and that in principle its related emissions should be accounted for; where battle lines have been drawn is the value of ILUC emissions and whether the scientific basis of ILUC models is reliable enough to include a specific number in legislation. Both sides of the debate have wheeled out experts with the latest versions of models showing very low or very high ILUC emissions and the resulting uncertainty has been enough to lead some MEPs to adopt a wait-and-see stance.

“The science is not yet sufficiently settled to put ILUC into legislation,” said Roger Helmer, UKIP MEP at a debate sponsored by the European Biodiesel Board last Tuesday. “There is considerable uncertainty not just in the model but in the underlying estimates.”

ILUC models differ not only in methodology but in the values estimated for inputs. These include a multitude of different factors, such as forecasted crop yield improvements, types and availability of fallow and idle land available for new crops and substitution rates between crops, particularly amongst different oilseeds used for biodiesel.

One new model, presented by the European Biodiesel Board at the Tuesday debate, calculated that emissions related to ILUC for biodiesel could be as little as 2.33 grams of CO₂ per mega-joule of energy used, compared with a figure of 55 grams used by the EC.

However, not all are convinced, some saying that the undisputed presence of ILUC, despite the variable estimates of its value, are due cause to slowdown the usage of first-generation biofuels. Oyvind Vessia, a Policy Officer at the European Commission and the lead on work there on ILUC and the EC's proposal, said that, “the uncertainty we see around ILUC estimates equally reflects uncertainty around the benefit of biofuels.”

In response to the argument that ILUC factors and a cap on first-generation fuels will damage existing investments, opponents cite a study by Ecofys, a leading renewables and sustainability research consultancy, which states that 95% of investments in conventional biofuel will have paid off by 2017, allowing new more stringent rules to come into place from 2018 onwards.

Holders of those investments would undoubtedly like to keep those assets running under current conditions, after enduring a consolidation of the industry in recent years and consequently realizing excellent margins this year following the introduction of anti-dumping duties against US ethanol and provisional anti-dumping duties against Indonesian and Argentinian biodiesel.

The threat of investment in advanced biofuels disappearing is too a real one, oil majors such as Shell and BP already announcing earlier in the year that they were scaling back investment in Europe and shifting funds towards the US, due to more favorable regulations there. Fixed mandates for advanced biofuels by volume are seen as a much more solid basis for investment than double- or quadruple-counting of advanced fuels towards a 10% mandate.

"We've pretty much discounted Europe when it comes to second-generation biofuels ... the vast majority of our investment is directed towards the US," said Olly Mace, BP Biofuels' Vice President Strategy & External Affairs, in June.

A representative of Neste Oil, who have been one of the market leaders in research into advanced biofuel feedstocks, for use in their NExBTL renewable diesel, stated again at a debate last Wednesday that the company was unable to commit to the R&D and capital expenditures required to really push ahead when they are so unsure of what the commercial reality will be when products are finally brought to market in some years.

Both the Energy and Industry, and Environmental committees have called for separate mandates for advanced biofuels, which is a positive step forward for investor sentiment in Europe.

Food price fears push EU lawmakers to put a lid on biofuels growth - Euractiv

[Euractiv](#), September 12th 2013

The European Parliament has voted to limit the use of fuels made from food crops because of fears that biofuels can push up grain prices or damage the climate, further undermining the once booming industry.

Lawmakers voting in Strasbourg on Wednesday (11 September) set a ceiling on the use of such fuels at 6% of overall transport fuel demand in the European Union in 2020.

Although slightly higher than the 5% cap proposed by the European Commission in October, it deals a blow to EU biofuel producers by effectively preventing them from increasing current output.

In 2009, the bloc set a target for a 10% share of renewable energy in transport, with almost all of it to come from so-called first generation crop-based fuels.

Biofuels, such as ethanol made from sugar or biodiesel from rapeseed, are blended with conventional transport fuels and added to vehicle fuel tanks. They were originally intended to reduce transport carbon emissions and cut Europe's dependence on imported oil.

But faced with claims that Europe's thirst for biofuels was driving up global food prices, and scientific evidence that some biofuels are more harmful to the climate than even conventional fossil fuels, the Commission was forced into a rethink.

"We can't stick with a policy that has such a negative effect on the countries of the south and on food prices. At the end of the day, the parliament has voted in favour of an acceptable limit," French Liberal MEP Corinne Lepage, who led the parliamentary debate, said after the vote.

With first generation biofuel consumption already at around 5% of total EU transport demand, and with almost enough installed production capacity meet the 10% target, a limit of 5 or 6% would call time on the once booming industry and force some existing plants to close.

Lawmakers backed an amendment that would force energy companies from 2020 to take account of the indirect emissions caused by crop-based biofuels, which increase overall demand for land and, as a result, encourage rainforest clearance or draining peatland.

That would effectively ban the use of biodiesel from oil crops such as rapeseed, palm and soy, which according to the EU's scientific models are more damaging than conventional diesel when their overall impact on the environment is taken into account.

The biodiesel industry says the scientific models used in the studies are highly uncertain and based on flawed assumptions.

Algae and waste

In order to try to make up the shortfall created by the cap on first-generation fuels, the parliament said the EU should set a new 2.5% sub-target for the use of advanced, non-crop fuels made from algae or agricultural waste in 2020.

A coalition of industry and environmental groups – including the European Climate Foundation and Danish advanced biofuel producer Dong Energy – have said that full sustainable use of agricultural and forestry waste could supply 13% of EU road transport fuel by 2020.

"This potential will only be realised if EU biofuel and related industries are given investment certainty and a stable policy framework by the European Parliament and Council," the group said in a statement.

One aspect of the vote that offered a glimmer of hope to the biofuel industry was that lawmakers demanded further talks about the rules before opening negotiations with EU countries to finalise them.

With EU governments yet to finalise their common position, talks on the proposals look likely to extend into next year. If they are not concluded by April, European Parliament elections scheduled for the following month could push back the law until 2015.

Several European governments are opposed to capping the use of biofuels as some dispute claims the demand for crop-based oils drives deforestation and food insecurity in other parts of the world.

They fear the collapse of the conventional biofuels industry after a number of countries had already begun investing in the feedstock-based fuels before the EU began advocating a move away from them.

>> **Read: [Ministers block EU proposal to limit some biofuels](#)**

Positions:

French Liberal MEP Corinne Lepage, who steered the negotiations in Parliament, said MEPs had voted to set "a reasonable cap on first generation biofuels," at 6% of overall transport fuel consumption.

"This is an important signal that support should be focused on advanced biofuels from 2020," Lepage said. "I regret however that the Parliament did not give a negotiation mandate that would have allowed the file to be concluded without further delay in order to give industry certainty regarding its investments", she added.

Speaking for the industry, the **European Biodiesel Board (EBB)** underlined that Parliament had "de facto" refused to give a mandate for negotiations with member states over the proposed biofuels legislation, effectively postponing a decision until after the 2014 European elections.

In particular, the EBB stressed the Parliament's doubts over proposals to measure land displacement caused by biofuels production – so-called Indirect Land Use Change, or ILUC.

"The rather indecisive results seen today show that doubt persists in using a rather young discipline for policy making," says **Raffaello Garofalo EBB secretary general**, adding that including ILUC factors, even for reporting, would convey the wrong signal to citizens.

"European regulators should be proud of the commitment of the EU biodiesel industry to promote a greener economy, foster agriculture and support industrial jobs. European biodiesel should set an example for higher standards, not be punished based on inconclusive science," said Garofalo, adding: "Europe cannot afford to threaten nearly 220,000 jobs based on simplistic ILUC assumptions."

Turning to advanced biofuels, the EBB said Parliament had chosen “a schizophrenic proposal maintaining present double-counting support but excluding Used Cooking Oil and Animal Fats from the 2.5% specific target allocated to advanced biofuels.”

“Waste and residues based biodiesel provide up to 95% greenhouse gas reduction compared to fossil fuels and it is not justified not to count it among advanced biofuels. Should the European Union be truly committed to reduce CO2 in transport, reliance on effective solution such as biodiesel from waste and residues should be fostered and biodiesel from waste and residues should be included in the advanced sub-target,” concluded Garofalo.

The **Greens/EFA group in Parliament** welcomed the “tentative steps” taken by MEPs to “address flaws” in the EU’s biofuels policy but said problems remained regarding displacement of food production.

Green climate spokesperson Bas Eickhout said: “Ensuring that the emissions resulting from indirect land use change are accounted for under the fuel quality directive from 2020 onwards will help ensure the EU is not promoting the use of biofuels that clearly have a negative climate impact. This would help steer investors and the fuel industry away from bad biofuels in the medium-term.

“However, regrettably, a narrow majority voted against starting negotiations with the Council to conclude this legislation. This will further delay the urgently needed action to tackle climate-damaging biofuels.”

Eickhout also regretted that lawmakers also failed to include emissions resulting from indirect land use change in the calculation of greenhouse gas savings limit for biofuels under the EU’s renewables directive.” This contradictory vote ignores the overwhelming evidence that Europe’s biofuel consumption is leading to the destruction of tropical rainforests, with major greenhouse gas implications. There will consequently be no guarantee that land-based biofuels perform better than conventional oil-based fuels in the near future.”

“It is also seriously disappointing that Parliament voted to allow a 6% share of land-based biofuels like food crops in the overall fuel mix. Feeding crops into cars has fuelled rising food prices and rainforest destruction and the EU should not be further exacerbating these trends by promoting the use of agricultural land for fuel. We should be shunning the use of food crops for fuel altogether but this 6% ‘cap’ is clearly too high. It is highly questionable why the EU should continue promoting biofuels without putting essential climate safeguards in place.”

Commenting on the vote, **Nuša Urbancic, clean fuels manager for Transport & Environment**, said: “Today’s vote calls into question the willingness of the European Parliament to fix the failed EU biofuels policy. Until an agreement is reached, it is uncertain for investors and the environment what the future of biofuels will be. What is certain though is that Europeans will have to keep paying for another seven years for biofuels that pollute more than the fossil fuels they are supposed to replace.”

Commenting on the Parliament’s vote, **Imke Lübbecke, renewable energy senior policy officer at WWF European Policy Office** said: “While it is positive that MEPs have drawn a line in the sand and introduced a limit for biofuels, EU legislation needs to do more. Parliament wants to delay accounting for indirect land use change from biofuels – a significant problem – until 2020, and even only in one of the two relevant pieces of legislation, leaving a major gap.

“Their action today does not give the market the right incentives to provide cleaner biofuels for the European transport sector. It is now up to the EU Member States to act responsibly, and improve the Parliament’s position, helping Europe on its transition to a more sustainable energy future.”

Rob Vierhout, the secretary general of the European ethanol industry group ePure, said: "It is disappointing to see that the European Parliament has decided to significantly reduce the market for conventional biofuels in Europe. At a time when we need to boost our economy it is difficult to see why MEPs agree to curtail jobs and investment in a sector that helps Europe to grow the production of clean and sustainable fuels."

Greenpeace was more radical, saying in a statement that MEPs had "supported the increased use of environmentally damaging biofuels, while at the same time calling on the EU to account for the destructive effects of these fuels on food production and greenhouse gas emissions."

"Today's incoherent vote was clearly the result of horse-trading. The Parliament wants the EU to drive on both sides of the road: to recognise that biofuels made from food crops are destructive to the environment, but to continue supporting them politically and financially," **Greenpeace EU forests policy director Sebastien Risso**.

Greenpeace called on EU countries to "stop and reverse" the expansion of harmful biofuels. "The full carbon footprint of biofuels must be accounted for and public support and subsidies for environmentally and socially damaging biofuels must be phased out. Priority must be given to real solutions for greener transport, including innovative energy efficiency technologies to reduce energy consumption in transport, green mobility in cities, and cars and trains which run on renewable electricity."

Global anti-poverty group **Oxfam** congratulated MEPs for having avoided "the worst case scenario". But it said Parliament was "still guilty of neglecting the needs of both the people and the planet", saying a 6% cap on biofuels is "far above current levels of consumption".

"Today's vote also introduces a new 7.5% binding target for the share of bioethanol in petrol; this would mean that by 2020 Europeans will have to buy 2.5 times more grain based biofuels than they currently do," said **Marc Olivier Herman, Oxfam's EU biofuels expert**.

"In their efforts to appease the biofuels industry and agricultural lobbyists, MEPs have failed in their duty to represent the best interests of their electorate and the one in eight people going to bed hungry each night. As a result, millions will continue to be susceptible to volatile food prices, deforestation and further land-grabbing. EU governments must now pick up their slack."

Next steps:

2013/2014: EU member states to agree common position on the proposal

2014/2015: EU Parliament and member states expected to conclude negotiation on the proposed legislation

MEPs split ahead of vote on biofuel targets – European Voice

[European Voice](#), September 5th 2013

Members of the European Parliament are scheduled to vote next week in Strasbourg on a controversial proposal to limit the amount of conventional biofuel that can be used to meet an EU target for transport fuel.

The proposal is a response to growing concern over indirect land use change (ILUC), which can mean that the cultivation of biofuel causes more emissions than it abates. There is also concern about biofuel crops displacing food production.

The European Commission's approach, proposed in late 2012, would specify that only half of the EU's target of 10% of transport fuel from renewable sources could be met by so-called 'first generation' biofuel suspected of causing ILUC. It would also force fuel companies to measure the amount of ILUC that their fuel causes, as part of fuel quality standards, though these would be for informational purposes only.

During a meeting of group leaders today (5 September), some centre-right MEPs will suggest that the vote be delayed until October because of reports published in the past few weeks.

An industry report presented to MEPs by the European Biodiesel Board (EBB) on Tuesday (3 September) presents evidence that ILUC impacts have been overestimated. EBB claims, for instance, that ILUC from production of rapeseed oil for biodiesel could be as much as 95% lower than European Commission estimates.

"The room for uncertainty on ILUC is too wide to put a figure in the directive," said Raffaello Garofalo, secretary-general of the EBB, at a debate in the European Parliament yesterday (4 September).

In August, the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), an environmental consultancy, had to publish a revision to a report issued in April that had found biofuel received up to €5.8 billion in tax exemptions in 2011. This figure was revised down to between €2bn and €2.5bn. The biofuel industry claims that this demonstrates the inaccuracy of the evidence against biofuel.

However, environmental campaigners insist that though ILUC is difficult to quantify, there is enough evidence to show that harm is being caused.

IISD will publish a new report on Monday (9 September) showing that Europe's import of palm oil, which is causing deforestation in Indonesia, is increasing faster than previously thought.

On Monday (2 September), campaign groups T&E, Birdlife Europe and EEB launched a 'stop bad biofuels' campaign focusing on the subsidies to first-generation biofuel. The campaign is collecting signatures to deliver to MEPs before next week's vote.

In July, the Parliament's environment committee backed the Commission's proposal, but a more sceptical reception is expected in the full plenary. MEPs are likely to vote to raise the limit for first-generation biofuel from the proposed 5% to around 7%, according to Parliament officials. They may also vote to remove the ILUC reporting requirement from the fuel quality directive.

Industry-backed study finds significantly lower emissions from biodiesel, Governors' Biofuels Coalition

www.governorsbiofuelscoalition.org, September 6th, 2013

Indirect land-use change caused by producing diesel made from soybeans, palm oil and other plants generates significantly lower emissions than previously thought, according to an industry-backed study released Monday.

The study by researchers from the University of Illinois, Chicago, and two private consulting firms found that a previous European model that measured indirect land-use changes overestimated emissions by up to 79 percent for some types of biodiesel. Lower emissions resulted from less land converted per 1,000 liters of biodiesel produced and less predicted forest conversion.

The researchers conducted the study at the behest of the **European Biodiesel Board, the European Oilseed Alliance and the E.U. Vegetable Oil and Proteinmeal Industry using an updated model called GTAP. The same model was used to measure land-use changes by California for its low carbon fuel standard.**

"This work has found that indirect land use emissions calculated using the latest version of GTAP are much less" than the European model, the researchers wrote. "There is reason to believe that the indirect emissions could be even lower if GTAP was further enhanced."

Indirect land-use change caused by biofuels, or the idea that growing crops for biofuel production causes lands to be cleared elsewhere to make up for lost food production, remains a controversial subject. Several studies show high emissions, while others demonstrate negligible impacts.

The authors of the new analysis compare their results to a 2011 study by the International Food Policy Institute that estimated the effects of the European Union's target of increasing renewable fuel use to 10 percent of road transportation energy by 2020. It found indirect land-use biodiesel emissions ranging from 52 to 56 grams of carbon dioxide equivalent released per megajoule of biofuel, and ethanol emissions ranging from seven to 14 grams of carbon dioxide equivalent.

According to the new study, emissions from soybean biodiesel are expected to be 50 percent less, emissions from palm biodiesel 56 percent less, emissions from rapeseed oil 65 percent less and emissions from other biodiesel up to 79 percent less than what the International Food Policy Institute's study found.

The decreases are due to higher expected yields on new cropland and less forestland being converted because of the addition of cropland in the United States and Brazil, the researchers said. Emissions would be lower, they predicted, if the model was enhanced to reflect the availability of fallow land and cropland pasture in more regions of the world.

The study did not evaluate ethanol produced from corn or sugar cane. It did project, however, that indirect land-use change emissions from wheat ethanol would be 33 percent less than the IFPI model suggested, while emissions from sugar beet ethanol were expected to be 136 percent higher.

The new study comes just a couple of months after an analysis by the French National Institute for Agricultural Research showed that the indirect land-use change calculations used by the European

Commission were inconclusive and projected biodiesel would produce 80 percent less emissions than the 2011 International Food Policy Institute study found.

It also comes in the midst of an active debate in the United States on the greenhouse gas emissions of biofuels and on the eve of a key vote in the European Parliament to decide whether to cap food-based biofuels at 5.5 percent of the European Union's transportation fuel. E.U. legislators backing the limit have cited greenhouse gas emissions from indirect land-use changes as a key factor influencing their decision to lower it from the current 10 percent level.

"Using farm land to produce biofuel crops reduces the area available for food crops," the European Parliament's Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety said in advancing the legislation. "This adds to pressure to free up more land, e.g. through deforestation, to grow more food — a process known as indirect land use change" (Greenwire, July 11).

Ethanol currently accounts for 19.9 percent of the biofuel consumed in Europe, while biodiesel makes up most of the rest. According to the EurObserv'ER barometer, which releases an annual European biofuels report, overall biofuel consumption within the European Union grew 2.9 percent between 2011 and 2012 and last year accounted for 4.7 percent of E.U. transportation fuel.

If the European Union is successful in passing the legislation to curb food-based biofuel use, it could increase the pressure on the United States to take similar measures, renewable fuel experts have said.

Other committees in the E.U. Parliament have indicated, though, that they would oppose the cap during the vote next week, as well as the indirect land-use change factors cited in the policy.

Raffaello Garofalo, secretary general of the European Biodiesel Board, said that he believed the new analysis showed that policymakers could "no longer deny the immaturity of science to serve for policy making."

Food price, ILUC studies released in run-up to EU biofuel vote, Ethanol Producer

www.ethanolproducer.com, September 6th, 2013

Members of the European Parliament are set to vote on biofuel policy next week. In the lead-up to the vote, trade organizations representing both the ethanol and biodiesel industries have released studies disputing claims that biofuel production increases food prices and results in significant indirect land use change (ILUC) emissions.

According to information published by the European Parliament on Sept. 5, draft legal measures to cap traditional biofuel production and accelerate the switch to advanced biofuels will be debated on Sept. 9 and put to vote on Sept. 11. The notice specifies that the legal measures aim to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that result from the increased use of farmland to produce biofuel feedstocks. One proposal from the Environment Committee, drafted by Corinne Lepage, a MEP representing France, calls for a 5.5 percent cap on first-generation biofuels. The Environment Committee also wants new biofuels policy in the EU to include ILUC impacts. Alternatively, the Energy Committee is advocating for a 6.5 percent cap on first-generation biofuels, and is against including ILUC in the legislation.

On Sept. 3, the European Biodiesel Board released the results of a study on ILUC completed by the Air Improvement Resource Inc., (S&T)2 Consultants Inc. and the University of Illinois, Chicago. The study, titled "Land Use Change Greenhouse Gas Emissions of European Biofuel Policies Utilizing the Global Trade Analysis Project (GTAP) Model," reveals ILUC values of up to 95 percent lower than previous estimates. The EBB said the drop is due mainly to improved understanding of land use, crop yields and forest use in the E.U., Canada and the U.S.

Within the report, the authors assert that their analysis has determined that ILUC emission calculated using the latest version of GTAP—a model that is undergoing near constant revision—are much less than those calculated by International Food Policy Institute (IFPRI). The lower results are attributed to higher yields of new cropland than assumed by IRPRI and the fact that less forest land is converted.

"There is reason to believe that the indirect emissions could be even lower if GTAP was further enhanced to be able to more accurately reflect the availability of fallow land in the world and cropland pasture in more regions than just the United States and Brazil. The reduction in ILUC emissions could be significant with this enhancement," said the authors in the report.

EBB Secretary General Raffaello Garofalo said the results of the study questions the validity of including ILUC science in policy making. "Policy makers can no longer deny the immaturity of science to serve for policy making," he said.

ePURE, the European renewable ethanol association, released a different study on Sept. 5 pertaining to biofuels and food prices. The study, titled "Biofuels and food security: Risks and opportunities," was completed by ECOFYS and demonstrates that ethanol is not causing food price increase.

According to ePURE, the study examines the casualty between biofuel production, global crop commodity prices and implications for food security, with particular focus on poor regions of the world. The study determines biofuel demand in Europe through 2010 only increased world grain prices by 1-2 percent, and would only increase world grain prices by another 1 percent through 2020 if no cap is placed on first-generation biofuels. The study also stresses that because commodity prices are

only a small component of actual food costs, and that local food markets are often disconnected from global markets, the actual impact of biofuel on food prices is far less than 1 percent.

"The study is a serious response to all the misunderstandings and confusions created around our industry and food prices. Renewable ethanol is not causing food price increases and capping production of biofuels will not address food security and hunger in the world. Multiple factors contribute to food prices and policy makers should distinguish between all the benefits that our industry provides to Europe, and the real causes of hunger in the world," said. Rob Vierhout, secretary general of ePURE.

New Study Finds Less Land Use Change for Biofuels, Biofuels International

www.biofuels-news.com, September 5th, 2013

A new study in the United States evaluating land use changes for several biofuel feedstocks and policies in the European Union has projected much lower estimates.

Land-use change occurs when land is converted to biofuel feedstock production from other uses. Some researchers have raised concerns as to whether land use conversions from other uses (for example, pasture or forest) actually reduced the biofuel greenhouse gas benefit. Thus, some land use change analyses resulted in lower biofuel targets in 2020.

The results of the new study Land Use Change Greenhouse Gas emissions of European Biofuel Policies Utilizing the Global Trade Analysis Project (GTAP), which employed an updated version of the GTAP model, showed that less land would be converted for EU biofuels production. The reductions in cropland for the different biodiesel feedstocks ranged from 18 to 70 percent less compared with a previous study.

The study found that biodiesel could account for only 2.33 g CO₂eq/MJ, compared to 55 g CO₂eq/MJ used in the EU proposal amending its biofuels policy. The difference was attributed to improved understanding as regards land use, crop yields and forest use in the EU, Canada and the US.

Biocarburanti: studio, Ue riveda modelli scientifici, ANSA

www.ansa.it, September 4th, 2013

(ANSA) - BRUXELLES, 3 SET - La Commissione Ue dovrebbe rivedere i modelli scientifici utilizzati finora e ormai superati in base a cui valuta l'impatto dei biocarburanti sui terreni e da cui in ultimo dipendono le soglie fissate per l'uso dei biocarburanti in Europa. E' quanto emerge dal nuovo studio americano "Land Use Change Greenhouse Gas emissions of European Biofuel Policies Utilizing the Global Trade Analysis Project (GTAP)", **presentato a Bruxelles dallo European Biodiesel Board (EBB)**. Il valore delle emissioni di CO2 indirettamente provocate dai terreni coltivati a biocarburanti (l'Iluc, Indirect Land Use Change) utilizzato da Bruxelles e calcolato dall'Ifpri, International Food Policy Research Institute, sarebbe infatti sino al 95% più alto di quello che si ottiene con modelli scientifici più aggiornati. Una differenza dovuta, si spiega nello studio, soprattutto a "una comprensione migliore per quanto riguarda l'uso della terra, i rendimenti dei raccolti e l'utilizzo delle foreste nell'Ue, in Canada e negli Usa", dove queste sono "cresciute in modo continuo negli ultimi decenni".

Lo studio arriva infatti a concludere che le emissioni legate alla produzione di biodiesel potrebbero ammontare ad appena 2,33gCO₂eq/MJ contro gli attuali 55gCO₂eq/MJ presi in considerazione dalla Commissione Ue nella sua proposta legislativa sui biocarburanti. La divergenza dei risultati scientifici, conclude quindi l'associazione europea dei produttori di biodiesel, "apre la porta al mettere in questione la validità scientifica dell'Iluc per decidere le politiche" sui biocarburanti.(ANSA).

New study challenges climate impact of biofuels, Europolitics

Europolitics, September 3rd, 2013

By Marie-Martine Buckens and Jakob Schlandt in Berlin | Tuesday 03 September 2013

Just a week ahead of the vote in plenary on a report by MEP Corinne Lepage (ALDE, France) on the revision of EU rules in support of biofuels, a new study, presented to the European Parliament on 3 September, shows much lower values than those proposed by the European Commission for the estimated climate impact of biofuels. The indirect land use change (ILUC) factor (inclusion of ILUC in biofuels' carbon footprint) is at the heart of the Commission's proposed revision of biofuels legislation. The Commission requires only the notification of these values in reports submitted by member states, but Lepage goes further and proposes to assign them to all biofuels so that these can be counted as renewables under Directive 2009/28 and thus contribute to the EU's target of 10% renewable energy in transport by 2020.

The stakes are sizeable for the European biofuels industry (biodiesel and bioethanol). In addition to the fact that the Commission and the EP report propose to limit the contribution of traditional fuels to 5% (half the target for renewables in transport), the inclusion of the ILUC factor could kill European firms, reiterate the two branches of the industry.

The study, presented on 3 September, was carried out by two American consultancies (Air Improvement Resource and S&T Squared) in collaboration with the University of Illinois (Chicago). It was financed by the **European Biodiesel Board (EBB) and the vegetable oil lobby (Fediol) and by the European oilseed agricultural association.**

Like the ILUC values proposed by the Commission, the results presented by the study are based on theoretical models. There is a major difference, though, according to its authors: they are based on much more accurate data and better understanding of land use, crop yields and forest use. In contrast with the model developed by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and used by the European Commission, the model used in the new study takes account of factors like higher crop yields and (limited) use of set-aside land and reduces the figure suggested by IFPRI concerning the percentage of forests destroyed to grow biofuel crops (the case of Indonesian palm oil in particular).

Regarding biofuels produced on European territory, the figures show that European forests are expanding. The study thus sets considerably lower ILUC values. For biofuels made from rapeseed oil, for example, it estimates a climate impact of 4.66 g CO₂ equivalent/MJ, compared with 55 g CO₂ eq/MJ proposed by IFPRI and used by the Commission. The value would even drop to 2.33 if the deforestation factor is not included, which would be the case in the EU. The ILUC value for palm oil would drop from 51 to 24.13 g CO₂ eq/MJ. **"The divergence of results due to a slight change in assumptions once again opens the floor to question the validity of ILUC science for policy making. Policy makers can no longer deny the immaturity of science to serve for policy making,"** observed EBB Secretary-General Raffaello Garofalo. He mentioned the findings of a study by the French National Institute for Agricultural Research (INRA) that also estimated much lower ILUC values than the American IFPRI.

The Lepage report will be put to the vote on 10 September. It is already complicated because the amendments tabled by the rapporteur for the EP's Committee on Energy (ITRE), Vidal Quadras (EPP, Spain), will also be put to the vote and some in the EP would like to postpone the date of the vote. The date will be known on 5 September after the meeting of EP presidents setting the plenary session agenda.

The stakes are sizeable for the European biofuels industry (biodiesel and bioethanol)

Subsidies: Erroneous figures

Erroneous figures in a study that put EU biofuels subsidies at around 10 billion euro have provoked a tough response from the German biofuels industry. The Director of the leading German biofuels lobby organisation, VDB, Elmar Baumann, told Europolitics: "The study by GSI-IISD that was commissioned by NGOs has been extremely harmful to the biofuels industry in the political discussion and when it comes to the image of biodiesel and bioethanol". Bauman said that it would be unacceptable to extensively use a figure that is more than 50% off the mark.

A week ago, GSI-IISD published an "addendum" to its study (www.iisd.org/gsi/news/addendum-biofuels) with massive corrections. The overall estimate for EU biofuels subsidies was revised down by around four billion euro (to 5.5-6.9 billion euro). The original figure of around ten billion euro has been used by NGOs such as Transport & Environment and ActionAid to argue against biofuel use. French MEP Corinne Lepage (ALDE), who compiled a report on biofuels, also mentioned the figure.

Baumann alleged that according to an Ecofys calculation on behalf of VDB, the original authors had even made a mistake to the tune of over five billion euro. According to Bauman, "It seems that NGOs are ready to use any means to reach their mission of destroying the industry". Stressing his disappointment with the quality of the study, he said that "The GSI-IISD report shows unbelievable technical and methodological deficiencies". He said that staff from reputable organisations such as the OECD and the Fraunhofer Institute had peer-reviewed the study to boost the GSI-IISD study's credibility. "It is disappointing that obviously these peer reviewers have not even read the study – otherwise they should have noticed such big and systematic mistakes."

EU biodiesel industry issues ILUC counter-study, Ends Europe

Ends Europe, September 3rd, 2013

The indirect land-use change (ILUC) impacts associated with biodiesel production from rapeseed oil could be up to 95% lower than European Commission estimates, according to an industry study published on Tuesday.

For years European biodiesel producers have been highly critical of the science behind EU plans to address the problem, particularly the IFPRI study which they say greatly overestimates ILUC-related greenhouse gas emissions.

The **European Biodiesel Board (EBB)** and two other industry groups have now released their own study to substantiate their claims. The study produced by US researchers is based on the latest version of the GTAP model used by the State of California to estimate land use changes.

It concludes that rapeseed biodiesel could emit just 2.33 grams of CO₂ equivalent per megajoule compared with the 55gCO₂eq/MJ attributed to oil crops in the commission's ILUC proposal tabled last year.

This major difference is mainly because GTAP assumes higher yields on new cropland and fewer forest conversions. Conversion estimates are lower due to the addition of data on cropland pasture in the US and Brazil.

The 2.33gCO₂eq/MJ value includes fallow land and assumes there is no forest converted in the EU, US and Canada. It increases to 4.66gCO₂eq/MJ if forest conversions are taken into account. The results for palm oil biodiesel and wheat ethanol are 24.13gCO₂eq/MJ and 3.25gCO₂eq/MJ with conversions.

"Policymakers can no longer deny the immaturity of the ILUC science," EBB commented. "There is still a need for further verification and data to have a clear view on ILUC figures, since the study shows in some cases a discrepancy of up to 95%".

The EU executive has proposed a 5% limit on biofuels from food crops. The European Parliament's environment committee voted in the plan in July. In the Council of Ministers, an Irish presidency proposal to drop the limit altogether in favour of a 2% target for advanced biofuels is now on the table.

Biodiesel Sector fights back on ILUC estimates on biofuels, Bulletin Quotidien

Bulletin Quotidien, September 3rd, 2013

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- 6 -

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SECTORAL POLICIES

(AE) ENERGY: BIODIESEL SECTOR FIGHTS BACK ON ILUC ESTIMATES ON BIOFUELS

Brussels, 03/09/2013 (Agence Europe) – A new American study, concluding on a much less harmful carbon footprint than that estimated by current European biofuels policy, could open new doors in the debate.

After a difficult debate between the European Council and the European Parliament on the draft directive tabled by the European Commission in October 2012 to limit the use of first generation biofuels from agri-food crops (the impact of which is considered damaging on the climate) and to replace them with advanced biofuels manufactured from waste, seaweed or biomass (*see EUROPE 10712, 10862, 10872 and 10886*), a new American study conducted by the University of Illinois Chicago could open the floor to question.

Accused of monopolising land reserved for food and feed, and of having a disastrous environmental track record due to indirect land use change (ILUC) – with the displacing of food production and plantations intended for biofuels leading to the destruction of forests, grassland or peatlands – biofuels (principally biodiesel) are apparently far from having a carbon footprint as disastrous as a number of previous studies have claimed. It was on these earlier studies that the European Commission based its legislative proposal.

In 2011, the French Environment and Energy Management Agency (Ademe) concluded, for example, that taking ILUC into account, biofuels do not respond to the European objectives of reducing greenhouse gas in over two thirds of their assessments. The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) calculated that, for some biofuels, CO₂ emissions are above those of fossil fuels when ILUC is included.

Unveiled on 3 September by the European Biodiesel Board (EBB), the study conducted by the University of Illinois Chicago provides much lower ILUC values for biodiesel – nearly 95% below the values on which the Commission bases its proposals. This difference is “*mainly due to improved understanding as regards land use, crop yields and forest use in the EU, Canada and the US*”. Account should also be taken of other factors such as the regionalisation of the analysis and the specificity of the crop yield.

“The divergence of results due to a slight change in assumptions, once again opens the floor to

question the validity of ILUC science for [environmental and energy] policy making. Policy makers can no longer deny the immaturity of science to serve for policy making”, the EBB states in a press release. (EH/transl.fl)

Land use changes: new study faces the EU commission on biofuels, Bioenergy Crops

bioenergycrops.com, September 5th, 2013

Following our recent post on sustainability and land use changes, we include here a new study on land use changes that challenges the EU commission regarding biofuels. A new study in the United States evaluating land use changes for several biofuel feedstocks and policies in the European Union has projected much lower estimates for land use changes.

Land-use change occurs when land is converted to biofuel feedstock production from other uses. Some researchers have raised concerns as to whether land use conversions from other uses (for example, pasture or forest) actually reduced the biofuel greenhouse gas benefit. Thus, some land use change analyses resulted in lower biofuel targets in 2020.

Land use emissions are generally stated in grams of CO₂ equivalent per Megajoule of biofuel, or gCO₂e/MJ. The EU uses a 20-year period to sum the emissions due to land conversion, and also biofuel production on the converted land.

The European Biodiesel Board (EBB) reviewed the IFPRI extensively and had a number of concerns with the study including the yield of crops on new land, the high proportion of forest converted, the high degree of substitutability between oilseeds, and the poor mass balance for the oilseed sector (oil and meal production was less than the quantity of seed crushed). Recently, EBB initiated additional work on land use emissions of biofuels using updated economic modeling, which is the subject of this study. This study used an updated economic general equilibrium model developed by Purdue University called the Global Trade Analysis Project, or GTAP. The MIRAGE model used previously utilizes the GTAP database modified by IFPRI. GTAP has been used in the U.S. to estimate land use changes by the State of California for its Low Carbon Fuel Standard. The model is undergoing constant development and peer review.

The results of the new study Land Use Change Greenhouse Gas emissions of European Biofuel Policies Utilizing the Global Trade Analysis Project (GTAP), which employed an updated version of the GTAP model, showed that less land would be converted for EU biofuels production.

The reductions in cropland for the different biodiesel feedstocks ranged from 18 to 70 percent less compared with a previous study.

Marginal lands, biofuels and Land Use Changes

As we often post in our blog, bioenergy crops can occupy large areas with marginal lands today considered abandoned or with low competitiveness.

The study claims: "There is a very strong reason to believe that the indirect emissions would be even lower if GTAP was further enhanced to be able to more accurately reflect the availability of fallow land and cropland pasture in more regions than just the United States and Brazil. The reduction in ILUC emissions could be significant with these enhancements. Other GTAP model enhancements that need to be considered include further tuning of the factor that selects the quantity of land converted from forest versus pasture. This would also consider the regional restrictions that have effectively stopped forest land conversion in the EU, the United States and Canada.

Biodiesel Board Calls for Consistent Biofuels Policies – Bioenergy Site

[The Bioenergy Site](#), September 10th

EU - The European Biodiesel Board has called for EU policies in the field of biofuels that are consistent.

The board said that it strongly believes that, without a thorough rethink, the policies that are being discussed by the European Parliament this week will strongly undermine investor's confidence in alternative biodiesel.

It said that investment triggered so far by the EU needs to be guaranteed as a matter of fair and wise EU industrial policy - especially in time of economic crisis - with grandfathering clauses.

"But this is not enough: if Europe seriously wants to keep employment in the sector and boost investment in improved biofuels we need to avoid any unreasonable U-turn on present support for existing single or double-counting biofuels operations and especially we need to establish a solid post-2020 frame," the board said.

The EBB said that Indirect Land Use Change is not an appropriate tool to ascertain fair and proportionate EU energy or biofuels policy.

"There are neither scientific proofs nor empirical verifications of the measurement of ILUC," the EBB said.

"Conceptual and measuring inconsistencies of the IFPRI study have been largely proven in the press and in scientific literature: the two very recent French INRA and US GTAP studies show ILUC figures lower by 50 per cent and 95 per cent (down to 2,33 grams for rapeseed biodiesel).

"To impose ILUC factors, even for reporting, to biodiesel based on completely inconsistent figures coming from present academic studies would have only a counterproductive effect diminishing trust and research in alternative biodiesel production pathways.

"EBB therefore strongly opposes any legislative mention of unsteady ILUC figures or factors in the new Directive, even for reporting purposes, while supporting efficient horizontal ILUC mitigation actions - this would be consistent also with the very latest Commission proposal on biomass for heating and cooling, which implicitly rethink the overall Commission ILUC approach not including any mention to ILUC factors in new legislation."

The EBB has also called for any cap on biofuels to be lower than seven per cent and it added that there should be a harmonised criteria for the definition of advanced biofuels, which should be based on the criteria highlighted by the European Sustainable Biofuels Forum (ESBF).

The biodiesel board has also laid out a series of proposals for the European politicians to consider this week as the debate the future of the biofuels sector and the European directives.

Europe Takes Another Step Toward Capping First-Generation Biofuels – Renewable Energy World

[Renewable Energy World](#), September 11th

LONDON -- In a hotly contested vote today, Europe's Parliament voted to cap the amount of conventional or "first-generation" biofuels (those derived from food crops) that can be used in the EU's transport sector.

In line with the Union's climate targets, European member states will need to source 10 percent of their transport fuel from renewable sources by 2020. No more than 6 percent of that amount will be sourced from conventional biofuels if the cap bill is passed into law following the next legislative step, which would normally be a negotiation between the parliamentary rapporteur and the Council of Europe.

However, some MEPs have asked for a second reading of the bill. According to activist group Birdlife Europe, this means that "the ball is kicked into the long grass" and a resolution on the issue is unlikely before Parliamentary elections in May 2014.

The cap appears to have been a compromise between two separate proposals to amend 2009's biofuels law, put forward by different factions. The parliamentary environment committee [voted in July](#) to impose a 5.5 percent cap on conventional biofuels, while a proposal from the industry committee asked for 6.5 percent. A higher cap would give the industry time to become profitable enough to invest in "second-generation" synthetic biofuel technologies, the committee said. The industry committee also asked that indirect land use change factors not be measured as part of the EU fuel quality directive.

Indirect land use change (ILUC) refers to the unintended consequences incurred when land is changed from producing food crops to producing energy crops, such as additional carbon emissions and reduced food security. The environment committee had proposed that only biofuels with low ILUC factors should qualify to meet member states' renewable fuel targets.

The method of calculating ILUC in order to include it in carbon accounting has been one of the most passionately argued aspects of the debate, with scientists from around the world weighing in on its validity. Many argue that the current ILUC calculation method is simply too unreliable to be used in making binding legislation.

Today's vote affirmed that ILUC factors will be included in calculations toward the fuel quality directive, but not immediately: ILUC will be measured beginning in 2020. The vote in favour was a close 352 to 343.

Both industry representatives and anti-biofuel activist groups have expressed dismay at the vote. Raffaello Garofalo, secretary general of the [European Biodiesel Board](#), described the vote as an "unacceptable compromise" and a "really bad step" by the Parliament.

"The Parliament, by this vote, seems to think member states in Europe will come down from where they are in terms of biofuels and go back to lower than 6 percent, so it's like a new target has been established," he said. There have previously been no restrictions on how member states can fulfil the 10 percent target.

"In Sweden, the Czech Republic, and even Germany and France they are already above 6 percent [in the use of conventional biofuels]," Garofalo said. "There are jobs, employment, an industrial economy. In 2009 Parliament said go to 10 percent; now they say dismantle it based on uncertain figures."

Connie Hedegaard, the climate action commissioner, says the vote will not affect the EU's renewable fuel targets. "These targets are there. We're not changing them," she said. "However, it's also clear that we must take care that we get it right. To achieve these targets and do it wrongly – what have we gained then?"

Activist groups have also spoken against today's result. Trees Robijns, EU agriculture and bioenergy policy officer at [Birdlife Europe](#), called the vote a "muddled compromise".

"The Parliament did not take a clear stand on whether using land to feed cars rather than sustaining people and biodiversity is a major mistake. Today's vote keeps the Parliament on the fence whether the EU should continue or end subsidising deforestation, hunger and land conflicts," he said. Birdlife Europe was one of three groups behind the [Stop Bad Biofuels Campaign](#), which was established in order to influence the vote.

And representatives of [ActionAid](#), the food security activist group that has agitated for removing biofuel subsidies, called the vote "a great disappointment." Nuria Molina, ActionAid's director of policy and campaigns, said, "MEPs from across Europe turned their backs on the world's poor, as well as their own constituents by voting for a reform of biofuels legislation that will continue to encourage food being used for fuel. A 6 percent cap on biofuels ... would allow enough food to be burnt in Europe's cars to feed more than 200 million people every year."

"However," she continued, "some progress was made as at least MEPs voted to acknowledge the role that biofuels have in causing hunger and contributing to climate change."

UK trade body the [Renewable Energy Association](#) (REA) said the vote "will prolong biofuels policy instability" and "sends out mixed signals." REA head of renewable transport Clare Wenner said, "Future investments are likely to remain on hold following today's voting in Strasbourg, which introduces a whole new level of procedural complexity into the ILUC policy situation. The 6 percent overall cap is too tight and the REA continues to oppose the introduction of ILUC factors until there is convincing scientific evidence that biofuels should be singled out in this way."