



PRESS RELEASE

19 JANUARY 2015

UN FAO chief: debate about biofuels needs to focus on their benefits to food security

Brussels, Today - Speaking at the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture last Friday, Director-General of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization José Graziano da Silva recognised the need for biofuels to address oil reliance and climate change and argued that the debate needs to focus on how biofuels can positively contribute to food production. ePURE welcomes these comments which are an important milestone in the debate about biofuels.

Speaking at the event Mr. da Silva said: *"it is important not to forget that biofuels emerged with strength as an alternative energy source because of the need to mitigate fossil fuel production and greenhouse gases – and that need has not changed. We need to move from the food versus fuel debate to a food and fuel debate...biofuels should not be simply seen as a threat or as a magical solution"*. The FAO also confirm that sustainable biofuel production can offer additional incomes for poor farmers.

ePURE welcomes Mr. da Silva's comments on the need to focus on the food security benefits of biofuels production and its synergies with agriculture. A previous 2012 study by the FAO outlined how the co-production of animal feed from biofuels already helps ease pressure on land use and contributes to feeding the world. In 2013 the European ethanol industry produced 3.2MT of high protein animal feed – a product that Europe is 70% dependent on imports of - enough protein to feed over 2.5M dairy cows daily in Europe, over 10% of the EU dairy herd.

ePURE also welcomes the FAO's call for a more pragmatic approach to the biofuels debate and recognises the importance to prevent biofuels production from causing any possible negative consequences for land and food resources. New scientific studies are now beginning to emerge that are informing the debate about how these possible negative consequences can be prevented.

Last week a new study by University of Utrecht found that the risk of negative land use change from biofuels production could be mitigated and even prevented when biofuels are produced from crops grown as a result of increasing agricultural crop yields and on currently under-utilized land. The study calls on policy makers to incentivize the use of these types of biofuels within EU biofuels policy.

“We welcome that the UN FAO recognises the need to move beyond a zero-sum, emotionally-charged discussion about biofuels. Our sector is striving to be even more sustainable and that is why measures to mitigate potential negative consequences of biofuels, such as ILUC, should be encouraged by EU policy”, said Mr. Robert Wright, ePURE’s Secretary General.

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About ePURE

The European renewable ethanol association (ePURE) represents the interests of European renewable ethanol producers to the European institutions, industry stakeholders, the media, academia and the general public. Based in Brussels, ePURE represents 58 member companies, with production plants in 16 member states, accounting for 90% of the installed renewable ethanol capacity in Europe. The organisation, established in 2010, promotes the beneficial uses of ethanol throughout Europe.