

Biofuels East Launch EXPOSÉ

At the East Launch hear the most sophisticated Biofuels Greenwash. It sounds good but guaranteed to drive Hunger and Climate Change

“We need to protect our food security, forests, water, land rights, farmers and indigenous peoples from the aggressive march of agrofuel developments, which are devouring our land and resources at an unbelievable scale and speed”,
from African Agrofuel Moratorium Call by African NGOs

Biofuel East will further strengthen links between industry and academia - to promote biofuels as ‘sustainable’ and to develop new biofuels made from trees or grasses. The most important question will not be asked: Can biofuels be sustainable at all?



Tree Plantation in South Africa, photo: Wally Menne

Organisers of the event, such as Renewables East promote biofuels as being generally sustainable, and even want to see them used in aviation fuel, even though...

Agrofuels destroy rainforests

Agrofuels are becoming the main reason for rainforest destruction. This is the quickest ways to make climate change worse. Without tropical forests, there can be no predictable rainfall cycle and no stable climate – forests have helped keep the climate stable for life on Earth for millions of years.

Agrofuels steal land

Action Aid for example warns: “The world’s 880 million hungry people are fighting a losing battle with the world’s 800 million cars for access to food crops.”

Agrofuels accelerate climate change

Fossil fuel emissions and ecosystem destruction are the key drivers of catastrophic climate change. More monocultures mean more deforestation, more carbon lost from peat and other soil, and more fertilisers made from fossil fuels.

Agrofuels are the primary reason for increasing food prices

Diverting food to cars and land to growing fuel means less people can afford the food they need. In its April 2008 report the World Bank argued that the drive for biofuels by American and European governments has pushed up food prices by 75%. In the last year 100 million more people are going hungry.

Event organisers promote ‘advanced’ biofuels. This means largely biofuels from wood, grasses and other solid biomass, which are still in the research and development stages. If successful, this is likely to mean:

• **Vast new industrial tree plantations**

Industrial tree plantations displace forests and other ecosystems as well as communities and food production (thus making more people go hungry). They deplete soil and groundwater, destroy biodiversity and require large quantities of pesticides and fertilisers. Much of the ‘advanced biofuel’ research focuses on genetically engineered trees, which pose serious risks to natural forests.

• **More genetic engineering**

Apart from genetically engineered trees, a lot of the research relies on genetically engineered microbes. The environmental impacts of those have never been assessed but could be severe.

• **More soil erosion and desertification worldwide**

Large quantities of crop and forestry residues are to be used for making ‘advanced biofuels’. Those residues are essential for keeping soils fertile and support much biodiversity. One scientific letter states that using maize residues for biofuels could increase soil erosion 100-fold.

At California’s Berkley University, students have been strongly resisting similar university-industry collaboration around ‘advanced biofuels’, protesting not least against the loss of academic independence.

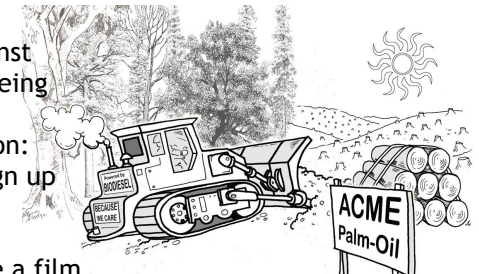
What can you do?

+ Take part in regular email actions against forest destruction and communities being evicted for agrofuels, and against the policies of promoting biofuel expansion:
Email info@biofuelwatch.org.uk to sign up to email alerts.

+ Get in touch with others to organise a film show or meeting to spread awareness of the harm caused by large-scale biofuels and to discuss local ideas for campaigning.

Contact Biofuelwatch (info@biofuelwatch.org.uk)

for more information and to find out about speakers.



“Goood biofuels - because we care”, *Throbgoblins*

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