

Further reading: good materials on agrofuels

The volume of recent articles, papers and other materials on agrofuels can be overwhelming. Below we list some that we found particularly useful when preparing this Seedling.

1) Worldwatch Institute, "Biofuels for Transportation: Global Potential and Implications for Sustainable Agriculture and Energy in the 21st Century", 2007.

<http://tinyurl.com/27fdjz>

The first part of this paper, compiled by the Worldwatch Institute for the German government, gives a good overview of the current situation with agrofuels. It lists the countries that produce them, the different feedstocks, the different technologies and so on. It highlights what we see as the right economic, social and environmental issues, but its policy recommendations fall short of its own analysis.

2) Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO), "The EU's agrofuel folly: policy capture by corporate interests", Briefing paper, June 2007.

<http://tinyurl.com/2decyx>

An interesting piece analysing how the corporations set the agenda for agrofuel policy-making in the European Union, explaining who is who, and what the different corporate sectors are up to in Europe, highlighting their direct linkages with the European Commission and their lobbying capacity.

3) Biofuelwatch et al. "Agrofuels – towards a reality check in nine key areas", April 2007.

<http://tinyurl.com/ypzxwu>

A good paper highlighting agrofuel impacts in nine key areas, including discussions on climate change, GMOs, biodiversity, food security and rural development. Credibly backed up by scientific evidence.

4) C. Ford Runge and Benjamin Senauer, "How Biofuels Could Starve the Poor", Foreign Affairs, May–June 2007.

<http://tinyurl.com/3c6dlt>

Discusses the impact of agrofuels on food security, with a special focus on the role and impact of US policies.

5) FBOMS, "Agribusinesses and biofuels: an explosive mixture", Rio de Janeiro, 2006.

<http://tinyurl.com/2fd3ds>

A good publication from the Brazilian Forum of NGOs and Social Movements for the Environment and Development, zooming in on the devastating impact of agrofuel plantations in Brazil.

6) World Rainforest Movement (WRM) Bulletin, 112, November 2006, special issue on biofuels.

<http://tinyurl.com/2nb4y9>

A compilation of different articles on the impact of agrofuel plantations, focusing on different issues in different parts of the world, with cases from Cameroon, Colombia, Indonesia and Malaysia.

7) Garten Rothkopf, "A Blueprint for Green Energy in the Americas", Inter-American Development Bank, 2007.

<http://www.iadb.org/biofuels/>

A massive blueprint study from the perspective of the Inter-American Development Bank. Highly positive about agrofuels, but with good information about the investment situation in different countries in the Americas, Europe, Asia and Africa.

8) Miguel Altieri and Elisabeth Bravo, "The ecological and social tragedy of crop-based biofuel production in the Americas", April 2007.

<http://www.foodfirst.org/node/1662>

A good piece, analysing the impact of agrofuels in North and South America. Good data on pollution and soil erosion for the main agrofuel crops.

9) David Noble, "The Corporate Climate Coup," ZNet, 8 May 2007:

<http://tinyurl.com/yrs8jv>

Excellent analysis of the corporate campaign that he says has "safely channelled fears over global warming into corporate-friendly agendas at the expense of any serious confrontations with corporate power". Noble, however, also claims, like Alexander Cockburn, that this corporate campaign has exaggerated the threat of man-made global warming, a claim that is challenged by George Monbiot and others in a lively debate on the ZNet website. <http://www.zmag.org/debatesglobalwarming.html>

10) Grist Magazine, "Fill'er Up", 4 December 2006.

<http://tinyurl.com/2r6k5m>

A special web-based issue of the magazine edited by blogger Tom Philpott. While somewhat focused on the US, it provides excellent insight into the corporate lobby behind the agrofuel push and a good general background into the ethanol debate as well.

Websites:

<http://www.biofuelwatch.org.uk>

Biofuelwatch is currently one of the most active sites bringing together information on the problems with agrofuels. Their "sources" section provides a good list of further reading materials. They also run a list server that you can subscribe to.

<http://ethablog.blogspot.com/>

English language blog that provides news and analysis of the Brazilian ethanol industry from a business perspective. Also provides useful translations of local information.

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55