

Advanced Biofuels USA

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Advanced Biofuels USA Makes 2012 Farm Bill Biomass/Biofuel Recommendations

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (January 24, 2012) Frederick, MD – Recognizing the fiscal restraints on the federal and state levels, along with the urgent need to transition to bio-based transportation fuels, Advanced Biofuels USA proposes low cost and cost-efficient policies that should be included in the Farm Bill which will be under consideration through 2012.

“As a respected independent nonprofit educational organization, Advanced Biofuels USA presents these as providing the “biggest bang” for the government buck,” explains executive director, Joanne Ivancic. “We have identified two specific problem areas. First, the challenges of bringing small, non-contiguous marginal acreage to productivity via an energy crop market; and, second, funding promising conversion and production technologies wallowing in the financing valley of death.”

“Our recent experience is in the Appalachian corridor,” she comments, “But what we learn here will have technology transfer applications throughout the US and the world.”

The proposals are:

Retain Agricultural Land: Agricultural and forest lands are vulnerable to loss due to reduction of the dairy and pulp/paper industries, and conversion to residential or commercial development. They could retain their agriculture/forest value if retained as biomass/biofuel production areas. Land retention programs should include:

- Demonstration programs to convert former pasture land to either multi-crop perennial grasses, other energy crops, or mixed hardwood forests for biomass/biofuel use.
- Development of portable biomass to biofuel precursors (sugars or oils) production systems that could make small, non-contiguous stands of biofuel grasses, oil seed crops or trees profitable.

Establish a National Biomass/Biofuel Policy: Using the “Billion-Ton” study as a starting point, a long term national policy should be established to assure that an economically and environmentally sustainable supply of biomass will exist throughout the coming decades. Elements of the policy should include:

- Multiple approaches that fit within regional ecological and environmental patterns

- Flexibility in harvesting patterns
- Ability to supply multiple biofuel and bioproducts conversion systems.
- Adaptations to changing climate conditions

Fund the Development of Biofuel Production Systems at the “Death Valley”

Stage: The best use of the limited R&D funds that will be available in the coming years would be to drive the development of lab-scale breakthroughs past the first stage commercialization phase which is often referred to as the “valley of death.” Such a research to commercialization program would include the following:

- Project size should be limited to \$5-7 million with a minimum of 30 project awards per year.
- Maximum cost sharing should be 15%.
- Projects should be focused on producing transportable precursors from a variety of non-food sources that could be used by a variety of biofuel and bioproducts production systems.
- Projects should be focused on decentralized or portable systems that would expand the availability of biomass crops to small and non-contiguous plots.
- Projects should be focused on optimizing biorefineries to accept these precursors and intermediaries.

Provide a Grower-Oriented, Easily Accessed, Bio-Crop Database: USDA and DOE have acquired a significant trove of information on all aspects of biofuel production. In addition to current websites that access some of this information, a grower oriented website should be established. Features should include:

- Crop types and projected yields, nutrient inputs and related information based on grower supplied entries of location, size of plot, and soil type. (Precipitation would be provided from USDA/NOAA information in the database.)
- Available biomass conversion and/or biofuel production systems.
- Location of biofuel bioenergy production facilities and estimated transportation costs.

Reform Land Conservation Programs: Current land conservation reserve programs should be reformed to include environmentally sound biomass production options. These should include:

- Perennial Grass croppings that do not interfere with animal nesting patterns or other environmental conditions.

- Selective tree harvesting that does not interfere with animal nesting patterns or other environmental conditions.
- Current government payments would be replaced by a combination of income derived from the sale of biomass and tax credits. For example, if the value of biomass payments falls below established CRP payments, the difference would be made up with tax credits. CRP land owners would keep any excess over the established CRP payment.

Advanced Biofuels USA, a nonprofit educational organization advocates for the adoption of advanced biofuels as an energy security, military flexibility, economic development and climate change mitigation/pollution control solution. Our key tool for accomplishing this is our web site, www.AdvancedBiofuelsUSA.org, a one-stop-shop library for everyone from opinion-leaders, decision-makers and legislators to industry professionals, investors, feedstock growers and researchers; as well as teachers and students.

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