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Press Release

COPA-COGECA HOLDS MAJOR DEBATE ON EU BIOFUEL POLICIES AND LAND USE CHANGES, WARNING EU MODEL FOR CALCULATING IMPACT OF BIODIESEL ON EMISSIONS IS FLAWED

Copa-Cogeca held a major debate this week on European Biofuel Policies and the impact of land use changes on greenhouse gas emissions, warning that the EU model for calculating the impact of biodiesel on emissions is fundamentally flawed and differs greatly from models and classifications used in the US. In the US, the benefits of canola biodiesel in terms of reducing emissions are highly renowned, Gerard Tubery, Chairman of Copa-Cogeca Working Party on Oilseeds and Protein Crops stressed.

The move came after the reports evaluating the impact of land use change on greenhouse gas emissions relating to biofuel demand in 2020 which were commissioned by the EC from the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)¹ and the Joint Research Centre (JRC)² were discussed in further detail in Copa-Cogecas Working Party. Mr Tubery insisted "It's ludicrous that the reports promote the idea that rapeseed biodiesel is worse than bioethanol. This is not the consensus view at international level. Indeed, the U.S. canola biodiesel is recognized as an advanced biofuel".

Copa-Cogeca Secretary-General Pekka Pesonen said biofuels offer many advantages in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, providing employment in EU rural areas. And they can be produced in the EU in a sustainable way, without being responsible for indirect land-use changes. Increased biofuel production in the EU also relieves land pressures in non-EU countries and helps to combat deforestation of tropical rainforests. The development of biodiesel is also important as the rapeseed plant can be used simultaneously for both biodiesel production and as a cheap feedstuff for animals. In fact, only part of the oilseed, cereals and sugar beet used to produce biofuels is actually converted into energy. The majority stays in the feed sector and is used as animal feed, with 6-8 million tonnes of rapeseed oil used in biodiesel out of 160 mt of vegetable oils and fats global supply.

It is consequently unacceptable to use these reports to allow an impact assessment of political options for an EU legislative proposal on indirect land use changes related to biofuels in 2012, Mr Pesonen concluded.

¹ Updated IFPRI report: "Assessing the Land Use Change Consequences of European Biofuel Policies - Final Report" (October 2011)

² New JRC report: "Estimate of GHG emissions from global land use change scenarios" (October 2011)

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