



## PRESS RELEASE

# **Food and fuel not food versus fuel is the way forward - EU policy makers must change the debate**

**Ghent, 11 June 2009**

Speaking at the fifth International Conference on Renewable Resources & Biorefineries (1) in Ghent, Belgium, EuropaBio's Secretary General Willy De Greef addressed the potential for agriculture to deliver food, feed and raw materials in an enabling policy environment. Food security comes first but better agricultural policies can easily deliver both food and fuel.

In an intervention entitled "Realising the dream of the bio-based economy: the need for feed" (2) Mr. De Greef explained that there are only two ways to increase agricultural outputs to meet current and future needs: cultivating more land or producing better yields on the land currently cultivated. If farmers are encouraged to use the latest science and technology, including biotechnology, agriculture has the potential to meet society's needs for food, feed and raw materials. Basic misunderstandings about the current limitations on agricultural productivity lead to misinformed policies and massive missed opportunities. Agriculture already delivers raw materials (eg. rubber and cotton) for the biobased economy. However, coherent policies are needed to expand this trend, particularly in feedstock production.

EuropaBio, the European Association for Bioindustries, has been vocal in combating the awareness gap between agricultural professional and policy makers on what agriculture can do now and what it could do if supported by a renewables based economy. The optimisation of land use offers additional environmental benefits of saving water and conserving the need to cultivate more land.

"Greater use of science and technology can alleviate the struggle for resources that we heard about in the food vs. fuel debate. However, misinformed policy debates are still blocking agriculture from delivering food, fuel and raw materials," said EuropaBio Secretary General Willy De Greef (3). He continued "policy makers need to realise that the limiting factor right now is coherence in policy and strategy. Farmers need policies that encourage them to mobilise scientific and technological resources for maximum productivity. Only then can agriculture deliver food feed and raw materials."

### **ENDS**

- (1) The fifth edition of the International Conference on Renewable Resources & Biorefineries is held in Ghent, Belgium, from Wednesday June 10th till Friday afternoon June 12th 2009. This conference aims at bringing together academic researchers, industrial experts, policymakers and venture capital providers to discuss the challenges emerging from the transition towards a biobased economy and to present new developments in this area. <http://www.rrbconference.com/>
- (2) To see the slides from the presentation "Realising the dream of the bio-based economy: the need for feed" [http://www.europabio.org/positions/white/RRB\\_slides2009.pdf](http://www.europabio.org/positions/white/RRB_slides2009.pdf)
- (3) To see a video interview with Willy De Greef on Delivering Food Feed and Raw materials: [http://www.europabio.org/ne\\_video.htm](http://www.europabio.org/ne_video.htm)

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**EuropaBio**

EuropaBio is the European Association for Bioindustries, solely and uniquely bringing together bioscience companies from all fields of research and development, testing, manufacturing and distribution of biotechnology products. It has 68 corporate and 7 associated members, 4 BioRegions and 25 national biotechnology associations representing some 1800 small and medium sized enterprises involved in research.