



## **Energy from biomass as a chance for the renaissance of the agriculture**

Translated from German to English by Marcia Lawton Schlichting.

Energy and fuels out of biomass contribute effectively to the renaissance of agriculture and offer chances to alleviate poverty and avoidance of hunger in developing countries. Headlines such as "experts fear food and water shortage through the organic gas boom", are in a journalistic sense, very effective but misleading. They misconstrue the actual causes of the price increases and the hunger in the world.

(Press1) - 2nd of May 2008 – anyone who converts potential foodstuffs into biofuels injures, in the opinion of the UN expert Jean Ziegler, the human right to nourishment.

In his speech at the Europe Africa Business Summit 2008, 28th - 30th of April, Hamburg (<http://www.eabs.info>), Prof. Dr. Nasir El Bassam, director of the international research center for renewable energies e. V. Germany (IFEED), warned against the twisting of ecological facts. "The key to future capable and durable rural regions lies in the provision of sufficient, environmentally friendly energy", said Prof. Dr. El Bassam in his speech. According to investigations by his institute, renewable energies offer the decisive chance to the solution of subordinate problems. With the use of such energy, essential provision areas can be expanded: Increase of the food production; profits, preparing and distribution of water; light, warmth, warm meals, mobility, education and employment, transportation of goods and persons. "We must look more exactly and objectively in analyzing the situation, because everyone has a large responsibility" said Prof. El Bassam. "Worldwide there is no scarcity of foodstuffs, and food production amounts to, at present, 130% of the world requirement."

In order to reduce the surpluses, ten years ago the EU introduced the 'Set-aside policy'. The volume of the set-aside areas in the EU in 2005 was about 5.4 million ha and 2007 in 3.8 million ha. In Germany, the annexed area of biomass for the production of heat, electric and organic fuels out of biodiesel, biogas and bioethanol is approximately 1.7 million ha, which amounts to only 0.5 millions of ha more than the 'Set-aside' areas. Therefore, food deficiency is not the cause for price increases of foodstuffs. The global finance crisis and speculations in the food area are authoritatively responsible for the price increases in recent times.

The agricultural area in Germany amounts to nearly 17 millions ha. For the production of biofuels to manufacture ethanol in Brazil, no more than 2% of the agricultural area is cultivated. The EU, USA, Japan and Canada subsidize the agriculture in its countries daily with the equivalent of 1 billion U.S. dollars. The farmers in the developing countries cannot compete with this. Moreover, the industrial nations impose high import taxes on agricultural products from these countries. The subsidized cheap agricultural products from the industrial nations lead the small farmers in Africa, Asia and Latin America to impoverishment. Poverty and hunger are a result of economic, social and political mismanagements and disorders, both nationally and internationally.