

PRESS RELEASE

Major Algae Scientists from the European Algae Biomass Association (EABA) underline the important potential of algae biofuels in terms of GHGs reduction

February 23rd – The Scientific Committee of the European Algae Biomass Association discussed and confirmed once again the positive potential of algae-based biofuels in terms of reduction of Green House Gases (GHGs): main progress in this regard is linked to prior and ongoing technology developments in algae biomass production.

Algae biofuels are of increasing interest to the scientific community, industry and political decision makers as they represent one of the most promising renewable sources for a wide range of next generation low-carbon renewable fuels (including jet fuels), as well as other bio-based products such as animal feed.

Algae biofuels are not yet available commercially in Europe, but important work is ongoing to unlock their potential. Their advantages relate to the potential for very high yield per hectare, quick growth, the avoidance of competition with food crops (no arable land is required), the recycling of waste waters which act as nutrients and the use of CO₂ emitted by other activities which enhance the growth of algae. In this perspective, work is ongoing towards the objective of making algae biofuels an efficient means to reduce fossil CO₂ emissions from industrial and agricultural activities.

The crucial technology challenge for algae biofuels research stands in ensuring the most sustainable, lowest cost and lowest energy demanding method for cultivating algae biomass (in open ponds or photobioreactors).

In a meeting held last Wednesday, the Scientific Committee of the EABA, which includes experts from major Universities and other scientists in the field of algae biomass, confirmed that a low cost, low carbon production of algae biofuels appears as an attainable technology objective for industrial development.

The EABA Scientific Committee is confident that the commercial production of algae biofuels can be achieved with a positive carbon footprint and will represent a further important step in the direction of reducing CO₂ emission in European transport, including aviation.

Today transport is the only sector in Europe in which GHGs emissions are beyond control and continue to increase every year, this is particularly true for aviation (jet fuels), where algae biofuels could be the only feasible potential means to reduce emissions. The European consortium AquaFUELS, which started its activities in January 2010, is set to deliver in the forthcoming months a sound scientific assessment of algae based biofuels in terms of both their expected sustainability and increased carbon efficiency.