

BREAKOUT SESSION BIOENERGY / BIOMASS

Summary of discussion

Points for discussion were:

- 1. What are the barriers for market penetration*
- 2. Where would the partner organisations or other research expertise be of benefit for commercialisation*
- 3. What are the current trends and best routes for commercialisation*
- 4. Where do companies see the role of InCrops*
- 5. What future activities should InCrops plan to help businesses*

The scope of the session was very wide, including technologies of greatly differing maturity (eg current and advanced liquid biofuels, biogas / anaerobic digestion, co-firing of biomass, CHP, bioremediation, biorefineries). The answers to questions 1-3 are different for each of these technologies, and in the time available it was not possible to go through each technology.

Hence the discussion focused initially on the final two points, ie the role of InCrops in the general field of bioenergy.

- a. It was felt that there was a lack of strategy and consistency in the economy in terms of which type of fuel molecule to invest in and pursue. The need for an Energy Directive was expressed.
- b. The issue of long term view was raised – what will we need 50 years from now? Emphasis is currently placed on replacing existing fuels for existing applications, but requirements may change drastically. The example given was CHP – although it is greatly more efficient than using the same biomass to generate electricity only (90% vs 30%, respectively), the trend in the building industry is towards energy-independent highly-insulated housing where heating from external sources is obsolete. Such factors need to be taken into consideration when planning strategy and investments.
- c. It was argued that we do not have 50 years to wait for. Immediate action is needed, and that means finding more sustainable / lower carbon fuels for existing applications (eg running busses on biogas).
- d. An Energy Strategy will become clearer this summer as the Dept for Climate Change will publish guidelines.
- e. A lot will depend on the price put on Carbon – this will guide the industry towards those technologies that give the greatest savings.

In general, the response to question one was: The current uncertainty regarding which type of fuel / energy will give the greatest carbon savings and financial benefits in the medium and long term is a major barrier to market penetration.

In response to questions 2 and 3, the Advanced Biofuels Hub of Renewables East is providing excellent opportunities and benefits to the industry; all participants are encouraged to sign up to this free service (www.biofuelseast.org.uk).