

Natural England

protecting and enhancing the natural environment

NATURAL
ENGLAND

Bioenergy: policy, progress,
and parameters for decision
making

Natural England

- Statutory advisors on the natural environment (including biodiversity, habitats, landscapes, and ecosystem services)
- A non-departmental public body (NDPB)
- A merger of English Nature and parts of the Countryside Agency and the Rural Development Service
- Approximately 2500 employees based at over 50 regional offices
- Headquarters in Sheffield

A backdrop to the future



- Climate change is one of the biggest threats facing the natural environment
- We need to develop clean energy based on renewable sources
- Bioenergy (and biofuels) will play a part in a future low carbon economy
- The current questions are **how, where, and by how much?**

Biofuels – our position



- Natural England will work to support a sustainable energy industry
- Sustainability standards must include impacts on biodiversity, habitats, ecosystem services and landscape – not the current EU position
- High, mandatory sustainability standards for biofuels will safeguard the environment, producers, and consumer choice
- Robust, transparent reporting of sustainability is also needed – building public trust

- Good information is becoming available to decision makers, questions remain:
 - Specific impacts depend on many variables including local environmental specifics
 - Significance of cumulative impact is unclear
 - Strategic assessment of our energy needs, and a full appraisal of the options is needed
 - The potential impacts of a growing biofuel industry need to be assessed

Biofuels need to offer significant carbon savings without presenting unacceptable environmental impacts elsewhere

the right crop, in the right place, grown and processed in the right ways

Meeting the energy challenge?



- Biofuels can be part of the solution
- But how much of a solution can they provide, realistically and sustainably?
- How much land should we dedicate to fuel, food, housing, flood management, and other vital ecosystem services?
- What is our 'land budget'?
- What is our land-use strategy?

Biofuels: meeting the environmental challenge?



- Climate change is one of the most serious threats faced by the environment
- Mitigating climate change isn't going to be enough to safeguard our natural assets
- Even if it was, climate change isn't just due to carbon dioxide
- Biofuels **can** play a positive and valuable role – but **only** if they don't make matters worse