



Association des Amidonniers et Féculiers

The AAF's contribution towards a bio-based economy in 2020

In the context of the fight against climate change and the EU 2020 strategy, the EU starch industry (AAF) can constructively contribute towards the sustainable development of innovative bio-based products in the EU. The new bio-based economy enables technological innovation in numerous market segments, use of renewable raw materials, diversification of the rural economy and creation of “green” jobs.

The EU starch industry extracts starch from cereals and potatoes and processes it into starch products and derivatives that are used as ingredients, functional products and building blocks in food, feed and non-food applications, and the considerable investments in Research & Development (over 100 million €annually) enables it to remain at the forefront of innovation.

The idea of using agricultural raw materials in chemical applications – the concept of «starch-based chemistry» - is not new. Because starch and starch derivatives are renewable and biodegradable, they are the most perfect raw material for the sustainable use of agricultural products. For the last 30 years, the EU starch industry has been producing bio-based products that are used as raw materials, generally replacing fossil-fuel-based products, in the fermentation, chemical, cosmetics, textile, paper, plastics and detergent industries. In addition, producing bio-based products in integrated bio-refineries brings economic, environmental and social benefits and improves the EU sustainable industrial production.

To enable the development of these markets with great innovative potential, the Commission created the ad-hoc Advisory Group for Bio-based Products in the framework of the Lead Market Initiative¹. Its recommendations outline the supportive legislative framework needed to enable the development of bio-based products in the EU, help fulfil the EU objectives of economic recovery and create “a competitive, connected and greener economy”. The EU indeed benefits from strong assets to realise its full potential: the significant presence of the enzyme industry, the experience of the EU industries in manufacturing bio-specialties; the presence of a strong chemical infrastructure and the availability of renewable resources.

Considering the key benefits that starch-based chemistry brings to all stakeholders and to make sure that the EU becomes the heart of industrial biotechnology in the world, **the AAF calls on the new Commission for a fast implementation of the recommendations contained in the Lead Market Initiative report on bio-based products, taking a holistic and co-ordinated approach at EU, Member States and regional levels**, with a particular focus on tax reduction for bio-based products categories, preference to bio-based products in tender specifications, targets for certain bio-based product categories, reflection process about the types of suitable product labels and the sustainability criteria to be given to the consumer. If these concrete measures are implemented, the market prospects aligned to 2020 are very encouraging: the starch industry estimates that under favourable conditions², it could replace as much as 18 % of fossil-based ingredients with bio-based products and bio-materials by 2020 (this would equate to a production of about 13 million tons of innovative bio-based products in the EU), and 40% by 2050. In the absence of a supportive legislative framework, this production of bio-based products would then drop to 3.6 million tons in 2020.

14 January 2010

¹ Please see full report “Taking bio-based from promise to market – Measures to promote the market introduction of innovative bio-based products”, published on 3 November 2009, and available for downloads at http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/biotechnology/files/docs/bio_based_from_promise_to_market_en.pdf

² e.g. concrete measures stimulating the demand for bio-based products, access to agricultural raw materials at competitive prices.