



DO WE STILL NEED BIOFUEL?

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SUMMARY

The article discusses the role of biofuels in the context of electromobility and questions whether biofuels are still relevant as electromobility increases. It is argued that despite the benefits of electric mobility, biofuels can play an important role in the transition phase and help reduce dependence on fossil fuels.

Do we still need biofuels if we rely on electromobility?

The energy transition and renewable energy have become an integral part of our worldview. The share of renewable electricity generation exceeded the 20 percent mark last year and will continue to expand.

Electromobility enjoys an unprecedented public presence in this country. Billions of federal funds have been made available for research, development, construction and market launch. Electromobility is environmentally friendly, keeps our cities clean and will lead us into a new era of drive technology. If we believe the advertising, the switch from the polluting combustion engine to the environmentally friendly electric motor is imminent.

Have we ever questioned these theses? Is the electric car really that environmentally friendly today? Will oil imports or our dependence on them be reduced? When we look at the facts, we quickly come to a very different picture.

Oil price has increased tenfold in 15 years

By 2020, one million electric cars and 150,000 charging stations, costing taxpayers another 2 billion, are expected to enrich the streetscape. Currently, 53 million motor vehicles are registered in Germany, which burn more energy (700 TWh) than all German power plants combined (617 TWh).

Even if the targets of 1 million electric cars by 2020 and 5 million by 2030 are achieved, there will still be 50 million vehicles on German roads that rely on fossil fuels. Coal-fired power plants still generate the most electricity, and more are under construction or will be connected to the grid in the short term. The share of CO₂ in the electricity mix has risen to a ten-year high. Despite e-mobility, CO₂ relief for the environment and a reduction in oil dependence will still be needed for decades.

The journey of the crude oil price is very uncertain, but certainly upward. In the last 15 years, the price of oil has increased tenfold. Due to the enormous energy hunger of China and India as well as the exploding energy consumption of the major oil-producing countries, an oil price of US\$ 200 and more per barrel is more than likely. In addition, Germany's oil supply is far from secure. Unlike gas and electricity, the crude oil and fuel market is not controlled by German corporations, but exclusively by foreign corporations.

Of all the accusations that have been levelled at biofuels for years, whether as food price drivers, as the cause of hunger in the world, as rainforest destroyers or as engine killers, not one has come true to date. How can an enlightened society bemoan global hunger and at the same time throw away over 2.3 billion tons of food (1), an amount more than five

times as much, to satisfy the hunger of 850 million people. How can we pillory the deforestation of rainforests and at the same time stock up on teak furniture at the hardware store? With low food prices, we forget that we pay for food twice: once at the checkout, a second time with our taxes. Every year, OECD countries transfer more than US\$ 180 billion to our farmers to ensure their survival. The EU-27 alone has to raise 80 billion a year to secure "cheap food". And how many engines have been technically knocked out by E10 in the last 2 1/2 years? None!

It is time to not only focus on a "post-2050" era, but we need to think about how we can make our immediate future of mobility more environmentally friendly.

Biofuels can and must play an important role. Biofuel processes have long been available (2) that are not only cheaper and more environmentally friendly than fossil fuels, but also have a positive impact on food production. A fraction of the money we spend today on mobility after 2050 would be enough to secure an affordable and environmentally friendly fuel supply, including infrastructure. We just need to break away from the influence of the oil companies on politics and their populist-led "anti-biofuel campaign".

(1) FAO, Feb. 2013(2) 3rd generation biofuel



THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST



Sincerely, Bernd Ahlers

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