

Biomass report

*EU Biomass supply, uses, governance
and regenerative actions*

Science for policy

The Joint Research Centre (JRC) provides independent, evidence-based knowledge and science, supporting EU policies to positively impact society



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Healthy production systems are key to sustainable biomass supply

Why a report on biomass?

As EU reliance on biomass is expected to increase, regeneration must guide EU biomass policies. In a dedicated assessment of the expectations of biomass in different EU policies, the JRC concludes that most refer to biomass as a resource for uses after it is harvested, yet many policies bring forward the narrative of biomass to regulate climate and provide habitat.

What is the current status?

As biomass production and extraction in the EU continue to grow, its long-term viability is at risk due to declining ecosystem conditions. The JRC report calls for more coherent governance and urgent actions to ensure that biomass production and use are compatible with ecological limits and EU policy goals.

What are the recommendations?

Any policy that relies on biomass should consider the whole system: the rhythm of nature to maintain homeostasis to ensure long term sustainability, implications of climate change on production (and vice versa), and the dependencies on third countries.



Forests

- We could be facing an increase in wood demand of 30% by 2050, which would result in demand for wood exceeding available domestic EU supply by 6%
- This would have profound and negative impacts, resulting in a decline of the forest sink of around 37% by 2050.



Sustainable land management practices and carbon farming schemes could help mitigate ecosystem degradation.

Fisheries

- Fish stocks harvested at or below maximum sustainable yield has increased from 28% to 70% from 2003 to 2022
- The EU is highly reliant on external supply: for each 10kg of fish that EU citizens eat, more than 6kg are imported.



The harvesting trend is in line with the common fisheries policy objectives and will enable the gradual recovery of fisheries over time.

Agriculture

- Over 60% of agricultural biomass is used for animal feed
- Only 24% of agricultural ecosystems in the EU are in good condition (moderate 53%, poor 23%)



Regenerative practices that reinforce the connection between people and planetary well-being could help restore ecological functions while maintaining productivity.



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