



The Public Acceptance of Biofuels and Bioethanol from Straw- how does this affect Geoscience

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The successful use of bioethanol as a fuel requires its widespread acceptance by consumers. Due to the planned introduction of a 10 per cent proportion of bioethanol in petrol in Austria, the University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria carried out a representative opinion poll to collect information on the population's acceptance of biofuels. Based on this survey, interviews with important stakeholders were held to discuss the results and collect recommendations on how to increase the information level and acceptance. The results indicate that there is a lack of interest and information about biofuels, especially among young people and women. First generation bioethanol is strongly associated with the waste of food resources, but the acceptance of the second generation, produced from agricultural remnants like straw from wheat or corn, is considerably higher. The interviewees see more transparent, objective and less technical information about biofuels as an essential way to raise the information level and acceptance rate. As the production of bioethanol from straw is now economically feasible, there is one major scientific question to answer: In which way does the withdrawal of straw from the fields affect the formation of humus and, therefore, the quality of the soil? An interdisciplinary approach of researchers in the fields of bioethanol production, geoscience and agriculture in combination with political decision makers are required to make the technologies of renewable bioenergy acceptable to the population.