

## **Is Belgium the worst EU biofuel pupil in the class?**

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The [GAVe-mail no. 15, 2004](#) included an overview of the bio-transport fuel implementation within the EU Member States, the Belgian Agripres therefore concludes that Belgium is the worst EU pupil in the class. This confirms the previously published article dated September 2004, published by the Vlaams Informatiecentrum voor Land- en Tuinbouw. However, it seems that Belgium seriously wants to make up lost ground. A number of politicians have made their feelings clear.

The Flemish Prime Minister Yves Leterme (CD&V) plans during the first half of 2005 to consult with federal ministers and other relevant parties to finally start producing biofuels. Leterme says in De Standaard 'the agricultural organisations and the farmers themselves are eager to get started'.

According to federal minister for the environment Bruno Touback the last bottlenecks to the Royal Decree regarding biofuels have now been removed. Touback has consulted with the regional agricultural ministers with regard to producing biofuels, and has prepared a Decree that meets EU guidelines for encouraging biofuels. Biofuels are not just important for achieving Kyoto targets, they also offer Belgian farmers the opportunity to grow energy crops now that the EU subsidies for sugar beets etc. are being reduced, according to Touback.

Senator Jacinta De Roeck (sp.a) is delighted that Environment Minister Bruno Touback has (almost) completed his Royal Decree on biofuels, but insists that farmers need clarification quickly. They need to sow their (rapeseed) crops by the end of February at the latest. The senator suggests keeping up the pressure on Finance Minister Reynders. Biofuels are only attractive to consumers if they don't have to pay excise duty, otherwise biodiesel would be just as more expensive than fossil-based diesel.

In the agricultural subcommittee of the Flemish parliament, the Agriculture Minister Yves Leterme has announced that in March a Round-Table Conference will be held on production of biofuels. People's representative Tinne Rombouts (CD&V) states in a press report that the Prime Minister should not forget the cold pressing of rapeseed.