

PRESS RELEASE

Global bioplastics production capacities continue to grow despite low oil price Europe set to lag behind / PHA ramps up capacities

Berlin, 5 November 2015. The results of European Bioplastics' annual market data update, presented today at the 10th European Bioplastics Conference in Berlin, confirm the positive growth trend of the global bioplastics industry. "The market is predicted to grow by more than 350 percent in the mid-term," says François de Bie, Chairman of European Bioplastics.

The data compiled in cooperation with the research institutes IfBB - Institute for Bioplastics and Biocomposites (University of Applied Sciences and Arts Hannover, Germany) and nova-Institute (Hürth, Germany) shows that the global bioplastics production capacity is set to increase from around 1.7 million tonnes in 2014 to approximately 7.8 million tonnes in 2019. Biobased, non-biodegradable plastics, such as biobased PE and biobased PET, are the main drivers of this growth. More than 60 percent of the bioplastics production capacity worldwide in 2014 was biobased, durable plastics. This share will increase to over 80 percent in 2019. Production capacities of biodegradable plastics, such as PLA, PHA, and starch blends, are also growing steadily, nearly doubling from 0.7 million tonnes in 2014 to well over 1.2 million tonnes in 2019. PHA production will double by 2019 compared to 2014, due to a ramp-up of old and new capacities in Asia and the USA. "It seems that compostable plastics are moving from niche to mainstream and many compostable plastics have found their true added value applications," explains de Bie.

Packaging remains the single largest field of application for bioplastics with almost 70 percent (1.2 million tonnes) of the total bioplastics market. Due to the excellent fit of bioplastics in the packaging market, this number is expected to increase to more than 80 percent (6.5 million tonnes) in 2019. "The data illustrates an important trend to make packaging more resource efficient, which is driven by a growing consumer demand for products with a reduced environmental impact," explains de Bie.

The data also confirms a decisive increase in the uptake of bioplastics materials in many other sectors, including textiles, automotive applications, and consumer goods. The land used to grow the renewable feedstock for the production of bioplastics amounted to approximately 0.68 million hectares in 2014, which accounted for only 0.01 percent of the global agricultural area of 5 billion hectares, 97 percent of which were used for pasture, feed, food, other material uses, bioenergy, and biofuels. This clearly shows that there is no competition between the renewable feedstock for food, feed, and the production of bioplastics.

With a view to regional capacity development, Asia will further expand its role as major production hub. In 2019, more than 80 percent of bioplastics will be produced in Asia. Europe will be left with less than 5 percent of the production capacities. Whereas countries such as the USA, Asia, and Latin America are implementing close-to-market measures to attract production hubs and promote faster market development, the European market for bioplastics is limited by the lack of economic and policy measures to allow for a larger scale-up of production capacities within Europe.

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Press contact:

*Kristy-Barbara Lange, Head of Communications, European Bioplastics, Marienstr. 19/20, 10117 Berlin,
Tel: +49 (0) 30 28482 356, Fax: +49 (0)30 284 82 359, press@european-bioplastics.org*

“Against this background, the implementation of a European policy framework that secures equal access to biobased resources, creates measures to facilitate market entry for biobased products, and accounts for the facilitating role of compostable plastics for efficient waste stream management, is of paramount importance. We urge EU legislators to consider and make efficient use of the immense environmental, economic growth and job creation potential of our industry in the forthcoming Circular Economy Package,” concludes de Bie.

Market data graphics are available for download in English and German:
<http://en.european-bioplastics.org/press/press-pictures/labelling-logos-charts/>

About European Bioplastics:

European Bioplastics is the European association representing the interests of the industry along the entire bioplastics' value chain. Its members produce, refine, and distribute Bioplastics, i.e. plastics that are either biobased, biodegradable, or both. More information is available on www.european-bioplastics.org.

About Institute for Bioplastics and Biocomposites (IfBB):

IfBB's research focuses on the development, processing, industrial usage, end of life scenarios, and ecological and technical evaluation of bioplastics and biocomposites. The scientific and practice-oriented approach of the IfBB often in close collaboration with the industry is an asset to engineering education and comprehensive bioplastic research. The IfBB offers a large range of bioplastic data like processing routes, feedstock requirements, land use and much more market data. All the information and downloadable figures are available free of charge at www.downloads.ifbb-hannover.de.

About nova-Institute:

Founded in 1994, the nova-Institute is a renowned sparring partner for industry as well as public and policy institutions at European level. The data excerpt of European Bioplastics only covers novel biobased and/or biodegradable plastics and is part of a comprehensive market study with a larger scope, the third edition of which is published by the nova-Institute in November 2015. More information is available at www.bio-based.eu/markets.

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