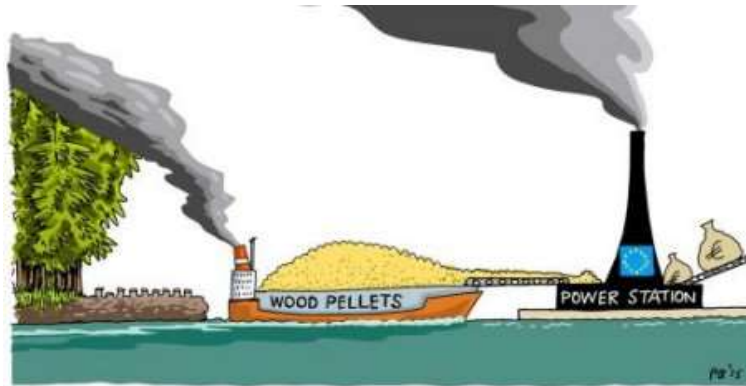


You can't do it alone, bioenergy body hears

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NO COUNTRY has made the move to low-carbon bioenergy without strong governmental support, the New Zealand Bioenergy Association has been told.

Earlier this year, the Crown-owned forestry research institute Scion told the Government that a million hectares of new forest could produce enough carbon credits to offset 28 per cent of New Zealand's greenhouse gas emissions, as well as supply the feedstock for new bioenergy and biochemicals sectors.

The Bioenergy Association is preparing a plan it says will help the country to shift to the low-carbon economy, but last night it was told it will need Government support.



Joel Allen

"No country has done it without Government support," Joel Allen of Auckland University's department of management and international business told a sector gathering in Wellington.

Strong markets

Allen, who is researching the creation of bioenergy markets for his Phd, says that countries like Sweden and Austria have developed strong bioenergy markets because their governments have given them the support they need to get going.

"In Finland in the 1990s, they were looking for a way to use their timber," he said.

"The Government decided to support bioenergy. They built cross-party consensus and they plan in 20-year cycles, so businesses know they can invest with certainty.

"They now have more than 30 per cent bioenergy in their energy mix, and China has just made a \$US2 billion investment."

Allen says his study of the New Zealand bioenergy market shows that while it has had some success, it hasn't made the Government sit up and take notice.

"You have to move from being a cottage industry to a developed market, from being a campaigner to being a powerhouse," he said.

New alliances

To do that, it should form alliances with other sectors and organisations with similar goals, he said.

The association says that currently, 2.3 megawatts of energy production is switching from coal to wood a year.

It believes that by 2040, 25MW could be switched a year, reducing the country's greenhouse gas emissions by 5.3 megatonnes a year.

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