

PA#15 The French Bioeconomy and supporting knowledge on the transition to a local circular bioeconomy

France plays a pivotal role in the European bioeconomy, capitalizing on its extensive biomass potential. Accounting for 18% of European agricultural production, France stands out as a leader, cultivating 28 million hectares, equivalent to 51% of its total land area. This diversified agriculture encompasses a variety of crops, including cereals, oilseeds, protein crops, and beets. The cattle sector, the largest in the EU, comprises 19 million heads, including 3.6 million dairy cows, generating an annual revenue of €72.8 billion and providing employment for nearly a million individuals.

Forests covering 16 million hectares and owned by 3.3 million proprietors are vital to France's bioeconomy, generating 440,000 jobs in related activities. The fisheries and aquaculture sector, with a vast exclusive economic zone, contributes €1.8 billion annually and employs 37,000 people. Biobased chemicals provide 25,000 jobs and constitute 5-10% of supplies to the chemical industry. Bioenergy, constituting 60% of renewable energy, plays a crucial role in the French energy landscape. The waste management sector, employing 120,000 people, generates €17 billion annually, with 15,000 workers specifically engaged in bioresource-related activities. In 2019, bioenergy reached 2.1 GW, covering 1.6% of electricity consumption. These interconnected sectors highlight France's commitment to a holistic and sustainable bioeconomy.

Looking ahead, the French bioeconomy holds significant potential, with the capacity to create over 90,000 direct and indirect jobs in the next two decades. Agricultural education, supported by approximately 800 establishments, is poised to adapt its training programs to meet the increasing demand for a skilled workforce in emerging bioeconomy sectors.

In 2015, France laid the foundations for a comprehensive bioeconomy strategy involving the Ministries of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy; National Education, Higher Education and Research; Economy, Industry, and the Digital Economy; and Agriculture, Food and Forestry. Key priorities include bringing bioeconomy products to market, supporting the transition to an innovative and sustainable biobased economy, producing bioresources sustainably, engaging in societal dialogue on the bioeconomy, and fostering innovation for an efficient bioeconomy. France plays a central role in the European bioeconomy, harnessing its vast biomass potential through agriculture, forestry, fisheries, biofuels, and waste management, with national policies aimed at supporting and promoting this transformative endeavor.



Figure 1: Compound Wheat

