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abc welcomes focus on renewables in Energy White Paper

Commenting today on the publication of the Government's Energy White Paper, abc Deputy Chairman Tony Combes said:

"We welcome the emphasis the Government has placed on renewable sources of energy as a means of diversifying the UK's energy mix and reducing our national carbon emissions. Such an emphasis has the potential of revitalising many parts of UK agriculture, by opening up new markets for arable crops.

"We believe that biofuels will play an important role in shifting our energy supply away from high carbon-emitting sources. However, a careful balance will need to be struck between setting aside land for fuel, and the need to produce high quality, affordable food.

"GM technologies can help ensure the optimal use of natural resources using the land we have available, and could provide an effective solution to the increasing demands for both food and fuel. For example, America has the target of producing 35 billion tonnes of biofuels by 2017. In order to achieve this target without compromising food supply or impinging on the natural environment, US farmers have been using GM corn for biofuels, and have literally reaped the benefits in terms of the improved productivity that these technologies provide.

"We look forward to working with the Government, regulators, farmers and the rest of the food and fuel chain, to discuss how, by placing science at the heart of agriculture, we can both understand and adapt to the challenges posed by a changing climate."

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Notes to Editors:

- abc is the umbrella group for the agricultural biotechnology industry. The companies involved include Bayer CropScience, BASF, Dow AgroSciences, DuPont, Monsanto and Syngenta.
- Under the Renewable Transport Fuels Obligation (RTFO), the Government has committed to increasing the uptake of biofuels to 5% by 2010/11. Today's White Paper reaffirmed the Government's commitment to the RTFO and outlined its intention to go beyond this five per cent level once important cost, standards and sustainability concerns are addressed.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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