

U.S. Grains Council and IICA highlight the importance of the bioeconomy and biofuels

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The bioeconomy is a key driver of sustainable development and the burgeoning production and use of biofuels in the Americas, especially due to the current role of biofuels as catalysts for agricultural and economic development in the region.

The President and CEO of the U.S. Grains Council, Ryan LeGrand, and the Director General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Manuel Otero, both stressed this point during a discussion that took place within the framework of a regional seminar entitled "Growing Energy" organized by the two organizations in San José, Costa Rica.

"We see the bioeconomy, and especially bioethanol, as a catalyst in the agriculture sector in the Americas; it creates jobs and markets. Today, much of the ethanol produced in the region is for potable alcohol, not much of it is mixed with gasoline. There is a good market, but they have the opportunity to create a new industry, and doing that stimulates investment and innovation. This is one of the main benefits we see of incorporating bioethanol in the Central American and Caribbean countries," said LeGrand.

Otero also highlighted the transformative impact that the current agricultural revolution is having, and emphasized that, due to its enormous potential, agriculture is no longer just an activity dedicated to food production.

“In addition to producing food, agriculture is growing energy, and generating new markets such as the carbon market. Producers have to be the guardians of biodiversity, custodians of rural territories, and all of this creates a new frontier of opportunities for agriculture. If we take full advantage of it and follow the good examples that are occurring as part of the energy transition, we believe it can change the face and situations of food insecurity, poverty and hunger in our continent”, said the head of IICA.

Both LeGrand and Otero acknowledged the fact that in order to make steady progress with the use of bioeconomy resources, it is imperative to educate and raise awareness among the population and governments about the environmental and economic benefits of an increasingly sustainable form of agriculture that is triggering the creation of emerging industries with huge potential, such as biofuels, in which agriculture plays a crucial role as a supplier of raw materials.

During the dialogue, the two experts discussed the focus of the joint work that IICA and the U.S. Grains Council intend to pursue following the signing of a memorandum of understanding. They will be evaluating the role and benefits of biofuels, particularly ethanol, in promoting economic growth, diversifying the energy matrix and decarbonizing transportation as part of the global energy transition toward fuels compatible with international commitments aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and limiting global warming.