

Cassava Bio-Ethanol Development in Nigeria and Its Food Security Considerations

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Abstract

Critics of Nigeria's cassava bio-ethanol production policy have argued that its development will have severe food security implications in the country. Our paper takes a critical look at cassava feedstock and landmass requirements necessary to meet the policy focus. We also considered the cassava production targets of the national cassava production targets and their landmass requirements. We determined that if production targets alone were the basis for analysis, then cassava utilisation as feedstock in the biofuel initiative would compromise food security as production requirements are about 17-25% of cassava production targets in the country. However, if the basis of analysis was landmass utilisation, cassava utilisation as bio-ethanol feedstock would not necessary compromise food security as less than 2% of arable land and less than 4% of cultivated land would be required to produce the cassava required to meet bio-ethanol feedstock requirements. In fact the total land area required to produce the feedstock and meet national production targets are less than 10% of arable land and 20% of cultivated land. Hence government and other key player of the cassava production system can be encouraged to open up the available land for greater production of cassava for the market.

Keywords: Bio-Ethanol, Cassava, Food Security

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