

Biofuels, Indirect Land Use Change, and Global Warming Emissions



● When the Renewable Fuel Standard, a biofuel consumption mandate, creates demand in the United States for ethanol and biodiesel, the agricultural sector responds by growing more of the crops that can be used to make biofuel—crops like corn and soybeans.



● As more US farmland is used for growing crops to make biofuel, the production of food crops declines as a percentage of the United States' total agricultural output.



● Global demand for food is not declining, however. To fill the unmet demand for food crops, farmers in countries like Brazil convert less-profitable grazing land into cropland.



● Displaced ranchers move their livestock onto land that had previously been forested.



● Clearing and burning forests to accommodate livestock releases enormous volumes of CO₂ into the atmosphere.

How Implementation of the US Renewable Fuel Standard Can Contribute to Global Warming Emissions Around the World