Special Issue

Bioenergy Crops: Current Status and Future Prospects

Message from the Guest Editors

Traditional energy crop cultivation needs to be adapted to alternative plant resources and cropping systems. The production of plant biomass for energy generation has to be sustainable, cost-effective and environmentally friendly in order to facilitate the shift from a fossil-based to a bio-based economy. Many energy crops have been intensively investigated while others still have unleashed potential. This also implies the utilization of e.g. marginal soils. Improving the conditions of such soils by incorporating biogenic residues, enriching the substrate with organic carbon and plant nutrients allows the subsequent cultivation of crops in a sustainable manner. Also the establishment and presence of a potentially plant promoting soil microflora may be pivotal for a successful energy crop cultivation. Finally, to get a better estimate of the footprint of plant biomass production regarding its overall impact from cultivation to product, value chain analysis, socio-economic and life cycle assessments are crucial for a better estimate of its sustainability compared with fossil resources.

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