

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR BIOBASED PRODUCTS



In cooperation with the US  
Department of Energy

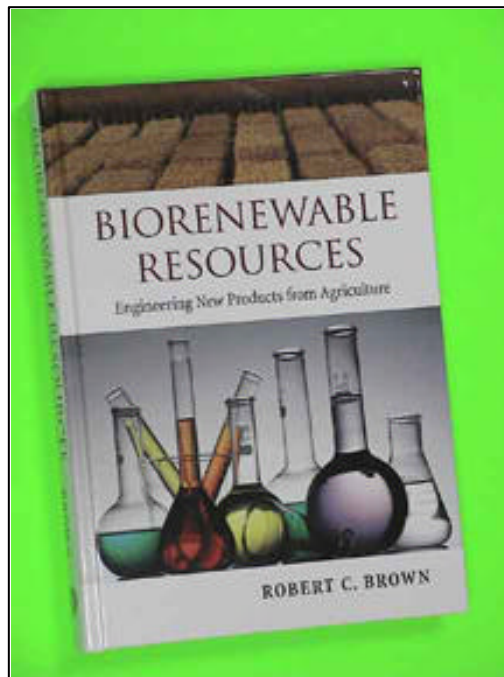


Biobased industrial products are produced from renewable plant and animal sources, and are generally presumed to be more environmentally benign than their petroleum based counterparts. They are usually biodegradable and can be returned to the earth at the end of their useful life or recycled and used again. Developing biobased products can provide new markets for biomass materials and provide energy, economic, and environmental benefits in the process.

In general, the term “biobased products” includes **biofuels** and **biochemicals**; however, the focus of this fact sheet is on **biomaterials**. Some examples of biobased materials include absorbents, fibers, plastics, composite materials, inks, dyes, pigments, pharmaceuticals, nutraceuticals, paints, coatings, solvents, and films.

The term ‘biobased product’ as defined by the 2002 Farm Security and Rural Investment Act (FSRIA, or more commonly known as the “Farm Bill”), means a product determined by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture to be a commercial or industrial product (other than food or feed), that is composed in whole or in significant part, of biological products or renewable domestic agricultural materials (including plant, animal, and marine materials) or forestry materials.

By using biobased products, the user is reducing our need for petroleum and other fossil-based resources and is promoting good stewardship of our natural agricultural, forestry and marine resources. Similarly, the use of biomass waste streams can reduce or eliminate the production of toxic substances that damage the environment, and the health of humans and animals. The manufacturer and sale of biobased products also provides new uses and new markets for agricultural, forestry, and other biomass materials



Section 9002 of the 2002 Farm Bill established a program within USDA to define biobased products and encourage their procurement by the Federal government. This section of the Farm Bill also provides for preferred procurement of biobased products by Federal agencies.

Congress had three main objectives when instituting Section 9002:

1. Improve demand for biobased products. This would in turn increase domestic demand for agricultural commodities and substitute products that are more benign or more environmentally friendly, as compared to fossil based resources.
2. Spur the development of industrial base through value-added agricultural processing and manufacturing in rural communities.

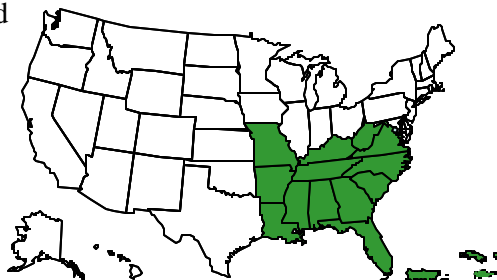
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3. Enhance the nation's energy security by substituting biobased products for fossil based resources derived from imported petroleum or natural gas.

Under Section 9002, Federal agencies must purchase biobased products unless those products are 1) not reasonably available; 2) fail to meet performance standards; or 3) are available only at an unreasonable price.

The website at <http://www.biobased.oce.usda.gov/> provides a portal for biobased product manufacturers/vendors to submit information and data about their products. Vendors can also submit independent lab test results on the products' biobased content and other key information that federal agencies will need to consider when buying biobased products.



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In addition, Section 9002 provides that USDA, in consultation with the Administrator of the EPA, will establish a voluntary program authorizing producers of biobased products to use a "USDA Certified Biobased Product" label. Section 9002 provides funds to USDA to support the testing of biobased products to carry out the provisions of the legislation.

Some states are following the federal lead and establishing "buy-bio" programs in their states. In order to avoid conflicts and confusion, these programs are using the federal guidelines and simply mandating similar requirements for state government purchases of biobased products.

*This series of fact sheets was prepared by the Southeast Biomass State and Regional Partnership (formerly the Southeastern Regional Biomass Energy Program). The Partnership is one of five regional administrations of the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) National Biomass State and Regional Partnership. The Partnership was established in 2003, and is managed for DOE by the Southern States Energy Board. The goal of this Partnership is to work cooperatively with the DOE Office of Biomass Programs (OBP) to facilitate the increased use of bioenergy and biobased products through coordinated federal, regional, and state outreach, education and technical assistance programs.*

**Partnership Project Staff**

Kathy Baskin, Project Manager	Phillip Badger, Technical Mgr
Southern States Energy Board	General Bioenergy, Inc.
6325 Amherst Court	3115 Northington Court
Norcross, GA 30092	Florence, AL 35630
(770) 242-7712	(256) 740-5634
(770) 242-9956 fax	(256) 740-5635
baskin@sseb.org	pbadger@bioenergyupdate.com