

Qualitative insights into the commercialization of wood pellets: The case of Andalusia, Spain

Highlights

- The study is pioneer on the commercialization of biomass from wood pellets.
- The study adopts the perspective of producers and distributors.
- The qualitative research allows a greater knowledge of this sector and its potential.
- The paper contributes to the formulation of policies to stimulate expansion of heating systems based on biomass and wood pellets.
- The outcomes provide a number of valuable conclusions for companies and institutions of the biomass sector.

Abstract

Pelletizing technology is gaining significance as an alternative for optimizing energy recovery from solid biomass. The large-scale implementation of wood pellets as a biofuel has the potential to replace fossil fuels for heat and power production.

This study explores the knowledge of different agents in the pellet supply sector regarding pellets made from wood, the major factors influencing the application of this energy source, and the potential demand for new formats and packaging. Such knowledge can help the sector develop strategies to better commercialize this biofuel.

A qualitative study among managers (producers and distributors) is carried out, together with a quantitative study of the biomass sector and the wood pellet market in particular.

The key findings are outlined. Firstly, that the pellet is mainly for the heating of family homes and other buildings, given its convenience, cleanliness, ease of use and stable characteristics. Secondly, that firms that work in the sector agree that the 15 kg pack is the most adequate, given its ease of use, transport and storage. Finally, results reveal how direct distribution to domestic users will predominate in this sector. Yet this calls for broader coverage through diverse points of sale.

The research makes an original contribution to the literature by generating in-depth knowledge about the logistics and future market potential of wood biomass. The final recommendations will contribute to formulate policies designed to stimulate more widespread take-up of heating systems based on this type of biomass.

Keywords

Qualitative study, Biomass, Pellets, Marketing, Heating systems