Transforming the “bio-mess" to carbon negative bioeconomies

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Transforming agri-food systems into circular and carbon negative bioeconomies has been put forth as critical to meet the needs of a growing population and remain within planetary climate boundaries. However, many solutions are not yet at scale, and debates over the role of biomass resource use have become polarized along contrasting points of view, too often precluding the more nuanced discussion of biomass resources, bioconversion systems, and biomass-related policies demand. Proponents emphasize the unique opportunity to displace fossil-derived products and point to the projected substantial role for biomass-based carbon dioxide removal in achieving future climate mitigation goals in global mitigation models. To its critics, however, these advantages are offset by the practical difficulties associated with scaling biomass value chains and technologies, and risks particularly if biomass markets accelerate the loss of natural forests and grasslands, competes with food production, or hinders energy decarbonization efforts. In this presentation, we will put forth case studies to spark conversations around the challenges, risks, and opportunities in bioresource use, and advancing circular and carbon negative bioeconomies.