expected to be the most successful calendar year for biofuels exports in history – and that growth is likely to continue into 2019. By October 2018, the last month of data had been reported, biofuels exports had already topped the entirety of 2017, reaching 1.41 billion gallons to 2017’s 1.37 billion gallons. This growth in biofuels markets, both existing and burgeoning, suggests that ethanol exports will continue to grow, as more and more countries around the globe embrace the fuel alternative for its economic and environmental benefits. Growth Energy is committed to supporting both established and emerging ethanol markets around the world and has worked to support our industry allies in other countries to do so. In 2018, we logged 19 international trips to promote trade and forge relationships with key industry officials and allies. Our association also submitted comments on five separate biofuels-related regulations abroad in Canada, the European Union, the United Kingdom, and Japan.

Looking into 2019, our top priority is to ensure that American producers and farmers are well positioned to take advantage of expanding markets and grow the global biofuels market demand. One critical aspect of doing so will be overcoming barriers to trade and fostering strong ties abroad in order to help drive economic development and help nations reach their environmental goals.

There is tremendous untapped potential for ethanol across the Americas, Asia, and other continents. Despite significant setbacks to achieving that potential due to trade tensions between the US and China, there is little reason to suspect that the unprecedented growth in exports of ethanol in 2018 won’t continue through 2019. As we head into the new year, we will continue working with our international allies and domestic producers to ensure a bright future for biofuels.

Get ready for RED II, new market and stakeholder requirements

Dr. Jan Henke, director, ISCC and Meo Carbon Solutions

As 2019 begins, preparing for upcoming regulatory changes on an EU and Member State level and adapting to new market and stakeholder requirements will be key to sustainability and greenhouse gas certification schemes. RED II, published in the Official Journal in December last year, sets the scene for the further development of the voluntary schemes recognised by the European Commission. Even if not implemented by Member States yet and with some further specifications to follow by the European Commission, it already casts its shadow ahead.

ISCC believes that biofuels will continue to play a key role in decarbonising transport, including aviation and maritime. This will come along with a focus on maximising GHG savings. A secure certification of GHG emissions, protection of high biodiversity and carbon stock areas, feedstock identity and traceability will continue to be the key priority.

Based on the delegated act scheduled for February by the European Commission on the criteria for certification of low ILUC-risk biofuels, a credible certification approach will also be required. ISCC has piloted low ILUC certification options, e.g. for feedstock from formerly unused land and from yield improvements. The latter could create tremendous additional benefits, inter alia in palm oil producing countries and could reduce deforestation. Whether any practical implementation of these options is possible will depend on details of the delegated act.

Further clarifications from the European Commission, e.g. on co-processing, GHG methodologies for new fuel categories, or on new types of Annex IX feedstocks will need to be integrated into certification as well. Globally, ISCC expects additional interest in RED certification. This is reflected by the recognition of ISCC for the Japanese ethanol market, the establishment of emission limits for ethanol in Colombia, verification programs for the LCFS in California or plans for a clean fuel standard in Canada. ISCC tries to support this with a harmonised sustainability certification approach with national adaptations where required.

In 2019, the multi-stakeholder dialogue will further intensify. The ISCC Association has grown to 115 Members. Next stakeholder events will be the ISCC Global Sustainability Conference in Brussels and the stakeholder meeting in South America (both in February). Stakeholder meetings in Europe, Southeast Asia and North America will follow. A meeting of the technical committee on Waste, Residues and Advanced Low Carbon Fuels will also take place. This committee inter alia deals with the new categories “Renewable Fuels on Non-Biological Origin” and “Recycled Carbon Fuels”. It covers their certification, GHG methodology and performance and market opportunities. Certification systems need to accompany the regulatory changes, new feedstock and processes with pilot projects, new audit approaches (for example use of remote sensing technologies), training programmes and with an integrity programme to allow for a high-quality certification.

ISCC will further develop its smallholder academy in 2019 to support smallholder integration into sustainable supply chains and will work on impact analysis. 2019 will show an increasing use of ISCC for industrial applications (e.g. chemical industry, packaging), for food and feed. This is reflected by a 35% increase of ISCC PLUS certificates last year with further certifications in the pipeline for 2019. The use of ISCC for recycled (plastic) wastes as feedstock is also taking off in 2019.

Despite all regulatory changes the focus of ISCC in 2019 remains unchanged: To offer a high-level sustainability and GHG certification system for all markets under the RED and to support the development of a sustainable bioeconomy and circular economy.