



## SUCCESS STORY

Farmers and politicians sign for sustainability  
Belgium

## Farmers and politicians sign for sustainability in Belgium

The Belgian agricultural sector is a sector that is constantly changing. Sometimes there's product innovation, sometimes the production process is adjusted. Sometimes the motive comes from the sector, sometimes it comes from policy. It is important that the agricultural sector and policy makers work well together and innovation is feasible and affordable. After research, innovations are tested in practice. Pioneers farmers are important to make from innovation a common practice.

One off the goals off the project was to promote small scale digestion to policy makers. This technology is still quite new in Belgium. The first installations were built in 2012. In the agricultural sector, knowledge about the technology is starting to spread. Policy makers are not very familiar with this technology.

### Farmer Koen Dendauw: Make the legislation and all procedures easier.

To bring policymakers closer to micro scale digestion, BBPROJ invited Belgian policymakers active at European, federal, Flemish and local level. Policy makers need to know what happens and what changes on farms. On the other hand it is important that the sector knows what moves on the political level. There are large (global) challenges

where agriculture plays a role, think of food security, climate, environment, nature ,...

Tom Vandekendelaere (European Parliament), Nathalie Muylle (federal parliament), Bart Dochy (Flemish Parliament and mayor of Ledegem) and Bart Nayaert (Deputy Agriculture West Flanders) responded positively to the invitation to visit a West Flemish dairy farm. The excursion took place on 6<sup>th</sup> of January 2017.



During the visit, farmer Koen Dendauw gave an explanation of the micro scale digester that he recently placed on his dairy farm. Koen has 65 dairy cows and he processes his milk into cheese, yoghurt, butter, ....

This processing needs a lot of energy. The farm has an energy demand of 70.000 kWh. In 2014 they've invested in a micro scale digester of 10 kW to produce their own energy. The digester

is feeded with fresh manure from the dairy cows.

During his explanation Koen described his experience with the technology. On

### The climate impact of the agricultural sector is reduced significantly with a Micro scale digester

the positive side he said that his energy bill has dropped almost to zero, and that the digestate

is a very good fertilizer for his crops. On the negative side he was rather disappointed in the amount of maintenance and the hard time he had to get his first green certificates. This was also a first action point from the farmer to the policy makers, make the legislation and all procedures easier.

After the explanation of the farmer, the policy makers talked about their connection with micro scale digestion. Off course climate change was a very important issue for the policy makers.

Every sector is part of the problem, but the agricultural sector has a great opportunity to be a big solution for the climate problem. Micro scale digestion is a great example. The climate impact is reduced significantly with this technology. First of all, renewable energy is produced. Secondly, methane is converted to CO<sub>2</sub>, which has a lesser impact on the climate than methane. Another important issue for policy makers is poor state of the agricultural

sector. Succession is not obvious for most farms. The only way for agriculture to survive is if it innovates. And this innovation will give the young farmers a chance to be successful in agriculture.

To support micro scale digestion, the 4 policy makers signed a letter of intent where they recognize the important role of bioenergy in the energy mix and whereby they confirm their intention to actively support activities that facilitate the implementation of micro-scale digestion technologies that produce biogas using mostly own (waste) biomass resources from farms.



After seeing the installation of Koen, the policy makers wanted to make sure that other farmers in the future will also have the opportunity to invest in a micro scale digester.

The whole excursion was attended by several local media. The local television network made a news video about the event. This can be seen in this [link: goo.gl/jSLXym](https://goo.gl/jSLXym)

The project BioEnergy Farm II wants to inform farmers about the benefits of micro scale digestion and give farmers a view on the feasibility of this technology for their business.

Are you curious about the feasibility of micro scale digestion on your farm?

From September 2015 we offer personal guidance at home! Our biogas experts have software tools to calculate the feasibility of micro scale digestion on your farm.



[www.BioEnergyFarm.eu](http://www.BioEnergyFarm.eu)



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