



**Press release small scale biogas conference February 9<sup>th</sup>**

## *Small scale biogas deserves more public support*

Tuesday February 9<sup>th</sup> 2016 two EU-wide projects on bioenergy have held a conference on small scale biogas. Both projects, Biogas<sup>3</sup> and BioEnergy Farm2 aim at the production of biogas out of waste streams. Biogas<sup>3</sup> has a focus on agro-food residues while BioEnergy Farm 2 focusses at on-farm digestion of manure. General message of the event is that small scale initiatives have all kinds of indirect positive effects besides energy production for which these local initiatives deserve more public support.

### **Two-sided sword**

Waste streams like potato peels, slaughterhouse waste or dairy manure potentially generate a fair share (10 – 25 %) of the energy production in EU member states. This organic material can be digested in small scale, on-site, biogas plants to produce biogas. For organic waste streams digestion reduces the waste stream, while at the same time green energy is produced. The biogas knife cuts both ways!

### **Methane reduction**

Farm based manure digestion also has very positive side-effects to bioenergy production. Animal houses are amongst the largest emitters of the greenhouse gas methane. Manure tends to digest when in storage, leading to large amounts of methane emission. If a farm-scale digester is implemented, the methane is released in a controlled environment and can be used as a sustainable energy source: biogas. In this way the green energy production directly leads to an equal reduction of methane emission.

### **All-time availability**

Biogas from small scale digesters can produce renewable energy 24 hours per day. There is no need for wind or sun: as long as there is fresh material fed to the digester on a regular basis, the energy production goes on. This makes biogas a very reliable renewable energy source. With the small scale plants promoted in these IEE projects, decentral and reliable energy production is realised. For the stability of regional electricity networks and natural gas grids, this biogas technology is very positive.

### **Self-energy consumption: smart use of resources**

Management of energy consumption can lead to a self-energy consumption system for many Agri-food companies. Those models were investigated and promoted in both projects. Agri-food industries which use their waste on-site and produce their own biogas are saving money thanks to saving energy consumption from fossil fuels. Many examples have been found in both projects. However, it has been highlighted that it is necessary to find a suitable location, adjust production to energy needs of the company and find the most suitable technology for the waste to be processed, among other aspects.



A smart use of the energy could be crucial for Agri-food sector in Europe development in the coming years. To promote success cases and facilitate the uptake of more efficient and “cheaper” technological solutions is a challenge for the next years. That could lead to an increase in competitiveness of Agri-food companies in EU countries and, at the same time, to produce in a sustainable way that could be appreciated by the consumer.

### **Green jobs**

Companies located in rural areas could take advantage from an employment point of view. Not only the required national suppliers of the technology but also the local maintenance service and “indirect” jobs related to small scale installations such as digestate spreading activities. These installations could contribute then to an increase in job positions in remote areas with difficulties in fixing the population there due to lack of diversification opportunities.

### **Public support**

Small scale biogas production is still an emerging sector. As a consequence, together with a relatively small installation, production costs per energy unit are high compared to other renewable sources. Therefore, other benefits of decentral biogas production should be recognized and rewarded, such as the methane emission reduction, CO<sub>2</sub> emission reduction due to use of renewable source for energy production, the all-time availability and buffering capacity. With support from local authorities, rewarding of the positive side effects, and better financial support, the small scale biogas sector in Europa can get a boost and become really part of the Green Energy Solution the EU needs after the Paris Agreement!

**\*\* End of press release\*\***

The small scale biogas conference “Sustainable small-scale biogas plants: generating employment and green energy in Europe” is an initiative of the IEE projects Biogas<sup>3</sup> and BioEnergy Farm2.

Visit [www.biogas3.eu](http://www.biogas3.eu) and [www.BioEnergyFarm.eu](http://www.BioEnergyFarm.eu) for more information about these projects.

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For more information about:

- Biogas<sup>3</sup>
- Agro-food digestion
- This conference

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For more information about:

- BioEnergy Farm2



- Small scale manure digestion



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