

Biogas Regions Advisory Group

Meeting held at the Newport Civic Centre, Newport, South Wales.
8th October 2008

Present: Andy Bull (SWEA), Mark Brown (Powys CC), Sue Thompson (Glasu), Adrian Jones (WAG), Tim Patterson (University of Glamorgan), Richard Baines (Royal Agricultural College), David Williams (Potters), Paul Roberts (Wales Environment Trust) and David Saunders (representing Organic Power)

Apologies for Absence: Oliver Harwood (CLA), Kierson Wise (SWEA), Sandra Esteves (University of Glamorgan) Lucy Lewis (Greenfinch), Steve Rist (Merlin Biofuels), Guy Hitchcock, Simon Dawes (Environment Agency) and Kevin Austin (WAG – Agriculture Division)

1. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted as accurate.

2. Matters Arising

Andy B. stated that he had followed up with Cotswold District Council (CDC) and discovered that the food waste was going to In-Vessel Composting under a long-term contract.

The Country Specific Framework Conditions document was now complete although Andy had been unable to put together a matrix of legal requirements as had been suggested at the last meeting. He stated that he had simply been unable to find the information and had drawn a blank from DEFRA. There were no other comments submitted within the two week deadline referenced in the last minutes.

3. Regional Strategy and Action Plan

Richard B. talked through some suggested alterations to the text in paragraphs 3.4 and 6.2.2 that he had sent through to Andy prior to the meeting. Those suggestions were accepted. **ACTION AB to make necessary changes.**

The Group resolved to adopt the Regional Strategy and Action Plan as amended but was very much of the view that it must be a working document that would need to be reviewed. It was requested that it be placed on the web site with a note that comments were welcome at any time. **ACTION AB**

4. Progress on Study Tours

Andy and Sandra had been working on the development of the proposed study tour and had been in contact with Karl Puchas from Austria who had responded positively to the

request from assistance. There had been no contact from the German experienced partner and so there was no alternative “offer” with which to compare the suggestions from Karl.

Andy/Sandra had sought suggestions for plants to visit that displayed various technologies and feedstocks. Karl had responded to note that our request would be difficult/impossible to meet from within his own region of Styria but had suggested some possibilities in the Vienna area. Sandra was still hoping to speak directly with Karl but the mix of plants was seen to be good with reasonable travelling times involved. There was still preference to visit a dry plant (not at that time located) and Sandra was following this up with Kompogas and Dranco.

Andy had contacted Biogen with a request that the study tour include a visit to their Bedfordia plant but a reply had not yet been received. The Group was very keen to include this visit if at all possible to Andy was encouraged to follow this up.

The Group was happy with progress to date and looked forward to the itinerary being completed and dates set. **ACTION AB/SE**

5. Regional Seminars

The meeting noted that another event was being organised in association with Knowledge West. It will be in Taunton on the 2nd December. Andy will be speaking as will Lucy – with Richard B. in the chair.

The Wales Centre of Excellence for AD is running an event for the Welsh Local Government Association on the 11th November in City Hall, Cardiff. This is primarily about giving AD technology providers the opportunity to talk about their products and for potential developers/users to quiz them on its capabilities. Biogas Regions will be represented at the event and will be paying a share of the costs relating to non-local authority attendees that will be invited.

It was still intended to run a seminar in June 09 at the University of Glamorgan would be potentially very valuable but this had not yet been planned. **ACTION AB & SE.**

6. Potential Sites in Project Region

Andy reported that activity was starting to increase and that he had very positive contact with a number of potential schemes:-

a. Great Porthamel Farm, Talgarth. This scheme had just received planning permission after something like 10 months in the “planning system”. Andy had assisted with advice and by setting up and accompanying the applicants in a key meeting with officers of the local planning authority.

b. Site near Llangollen. This scheme had been prompted by a presentation on AD that Andy had delivered at a conference at the Centre for Alternative Technology. One site

meeting had been held and another was planned that was to include Sandra and officers from the relevant Council as well as the potential developer. This was potentially a food waste and grass silage project with woodfuel drying as an integrated by-product.

c. David had put a farmer near Welshpool in contact with the project. He had been visited once and was due to be visited again. This project had a primary focus of animal waste management/pollution abatement.

d. Lucy had referred a project in eastern Radnorshire to SWEA. The potential here was chicken litter, cattle manure and maize silage with gas utilised for CHP with the primary heat load being the chicken rearing sheds.

e. A not dissimilar project had made contact with SWEA but this time prior to new sheds being constructed. The site was in Gloucestershire and Andy was due to accompany the potential developer to meet an officer of the local planning authority. Permission for the sheds had already been granted but construction had not yet commenced.

f. The agent for a potential developer had contacted Biogas Regions to seek assistance in negotiations with the local planning authority in Gloucestershire. One of the issues related to the alleged need for Environmental Impact Assessment. Andy had been able to supply the “Country Specific Framework Conditions” report to the agent in order to assist him in arguments with the planning officer.

7. Biomass Demonstration and Centre of Excellence at Royal Agricultural College

Richard B. explained some of his ideas and the potential for the practical demonstration of a number of biomass related technologies in and around the Royal Agricultural College at Cirencester. These were still very early days but he had made a start by talking things through with key people at RAC.

He raised the idea of RAC becoming a centre of excellence for AD in the SW of England and thought that discussions with the University of Glamorgan would be a good early step as they had now established the Wales Centre. **ACTION RB**

7. Membership of the Advisory Group

Following approaches made since the last meeting the membership of the Advisory Group was agreed as:-

Adrian Jones (Welsh Assembly Government – waste group), Lucy Lewis (Greenfinch), Christopher Maltin (Organic Power), David Williams (Potters), Guy Hitchcock (Sustainable Transport Network), Kevin Austin (WAG – agriculture group), Kierson Wise (SWEA), Lisa Pritchard (Gloucestershire CC), Beverly Hodgett (Mid Wales Waste Group (joint Powys/Ceredigion Councils)), Oliver Harwood (CLA), Richard Dinsdale (University of Glamorgan), Richard Baines (RAC), Sandra Esteves (UoG), Simon Dawes (Environment Agency – England), Steve Rist (Merlin Biofuels), Sue Thompson (Glasu),

Tim Patterson (UoG), Paul Roberts (Wales Environment Trust) and David Saunders (partner to Organic Power).

It was considered that there was still a gap in membership from Wiltshire CC.

10. Date and Venue for Next Meeting.

The meeting was again very satisfied with the venue of the meeting and expressed the hope that it could be used again.

No date was set for the meeting which would be during the spring of 2009.