FARMAGAS: PRODUCTION OF BIOGAS FROM AGRICULTURAL WASTE IN EUROPEAN FARMS

The **demand for sustainable solutions to generate energy is growing** exponentially at a European, national and regional level. At present, **the European Union only covers a low percentage of its energy needs through the use of biomass,** and agricultural waste generally receives the cheapest treatments, despite the fact that these are not the most suitable for the environment (combustion, burial, etc.).

Producing biogas through anaerobic digestion is **an alternative treatment** to conventional treatments and has **great potential.** Not only does it avoid ecological damage, **it also allows energy to be produced efficiently** without affecting food production or other possible competing markets. It is therefore expected that it will be widely developed in coming years.

The **FARMAGAS** project **was mainly geared at small and medium-sized farmers.** The project's aim was to **promote the future development of biogas industries in countries with high potential** through the dissemination and transfer of existing know-how to boost the application of the anaerobic digestion process to agricultural waste in European farms.

THIS PROJECT WAS BASED ON THE RESULTS OF THE AGROBIOGAS PROJECT (COLL-CT-2006-030348), THE OUTCOMES OF WHICH INCLUDED DATABASES, SOFTWARE TOOLS, GUIDELINES, ETC

That provided information to farmers about the potential of their agricultural waste to produce biogas. This project, however, did not cover some highly agricultural regions with great potential for biogas production from waste. Hence, three of the AGROBIOGAS project's key partners conceived the FARMAGAS project in conjunction with the agricultural associations of three **key countries** in this industry, **Romania, Hungary and Poland.**

Using the existing infrastructures belonging to these key countries' associations, **dissemination and training activities** were carried out **to promote the use** of anaerobic digestion as a way to treat agricultural waste while **at the same time eliminating the barriers which impeded the desired development of biogas as a renewable energy source.**

OBJECTIVES

- Disseminate **the advantages of anaerobic digestion and biogas production** which were initiated in the AGROBIOGAS project.

- Identify **the main impediments preventing the propagation of biogas technologies,** along with fostering alternatives and solutions to do away with these barriers.

- Place at the disposal of farmers **suitable and relevant information** about the biogas industry, thus strengthening current biogas **technology know-how** and already existing infrastructures.

- Facilitate **the transfer of know-how and experiences** about agricultural waste anaerobic digestion in the project's participating countries, as well as in other highly agricultural countries which may have an interest in it.

- Diversify **farmers' sources of income** by enabling them to break into the emerging renewable energy market and offering them an alternative that would give them a stable source of income.

- Contribute to **rural development** by increasing the industry's competitiveness and raising the quality of life in rural areas. Foster the **establishment of trade policies** between neighbouring countries.

- Promote **the setting up of agricultural energy groupings** for biogas production in Europe.

RESULTS OBTAINED

- **Outreach and awareness-raising campaign** aimed at transferring know-how to agricultural producers and other possible end users, industry professionals, authorities, institutional managers, government aid managers and other relevant stakeholders, which reached 271,090 people by:

  - **Creating informative materials** and translating them into the different languages of the consortium's countries, including: leaflets, posters, newsletters, technical datasheets, etc.

  - **Creating and maintaining a project website,** which contained dissemination materials and useful information about anaerobic digestion, biogas production and its applicability as an energy source. At the end of the project, 2,561 visits from 63 countries had been recorded.

  - **Designing national informative campaigns,** including activities after the project's completion.

  - **Visits to farmers.**

  - **Radio and television interviews.**

- **Dissemination of know-how and experience** on anaerobic digestion and biogas production resulting from the work begun by the AGROBIOGAS project, reaching new groups sensitive to these technologies.

- **Development of training and dissemination strategies,** including organising training workshops: (1) trainer **training workshops,** (2) workshops for local farmers and (3) workshops for regional and national authorities, which were attended by total of 449 participants.

- **Setting up clusters to establish close collaboration between farmers and other relevant stakeholders.** These are functional structures aimed at establishing medium and short-term plans, including agreements, action plans, meetings, etc. Once the project had ended, two clusters had already been set up.

PROJECT DATA

Web: www.farmagas.eu
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More info: IEE-FARMAGAS

BIOAZUL (Spain)
TTZ (Germany)
DAAS (Denmark)
SITR (Poland)
HFV (Hungary)
FNPAR (Romania)