

Buttermilk Hall:

EnviTec Biogas anaerobic digestion plant increases income and crop diversity

Location: Buttermilk Hall Farm, Hertfordshire

Capacity: 1067 kW_e

Feedstock: maize and farm residues

Input volume: 20,000 tonnes a year

Commissioned: 2012

Highlights: Long-term, stable income from Feed in Tariffs, income from sale of feedstock, soil improvement, crop diversity

Income and diversity from EnviTec Biogas anaerobic digestion unit

Buttermilk Hall is producing its own electricity and selling the surplus to the grid thanks to a 1MW anaerobic digestion unit planned, built and commissioned by EnviTec Biogas.

Buttermilk Hall is a 1,200 hectare arable farm which also contracts an additional 4,000 to 4,800 hectares. The farming company produces wheat, rape and maize. Maize grown by the firm feeds the digester, and additional income is raised by selling maize to other anaerobic digestion facilities in the South East.

The considerable savings from farm-produced renewable energy and the significant income from selling surplus electricity to the grid under the Feed in Tariffs will see a return on investment in about five years. Long-term, fixed incentives under the Feed in Tariffs are helping business planning and countering the volatility of wheat prices.

The digestate produced is a high-quality organic fertiliser, and up to 90 per cent of input materials are spread onto the land at the end of the process. This cuts fertiliser costs, while the organic matter improves soil condition and moisture retention – vital advantages in intensively farmed, relatively dry arable areas.

In addition, biogas production makes it economically beneficial to grow break crops like maize, especially in heavy arable areas such as the South East where there wouldn't otherwise be an opportunity or reason to grow them.

Green energy production can also be a powerful part of the marketing mix, helping to win orders from top-tier buyers and gaining goodwill from the surrounding community. EnviTec Biogas worked with its partners every step of the way to deliver a facility tailored to the business's needs.

EnviTec Biogas UK specialises in helping farm businesses increase revenues and save money by turning crops, slurry and forage into renewable energy. Anaerobic digestion plants produce heat and electricity that can be used in-house or sold to the grid. Energy generated by anaerobic digestion attracts long-term, significant income from government environmental incentives such as the Feed in Tariffs.

EnviTec Biogas is one of the world leaders in its field. From its base in Staffordshire, EnviTec Biogas UK plans, builds, runs and services anaerobic digestion plants across the country. Contact details (UK only and to be in 01889 584459 format rather than +44 18 89 etc.) e-mail: info-uk@envitec-biogas.com