



AGRICULTURE NEWS

New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets
10B Airline Drive • Albany, New York 12235 • www.agmkt.state.ny.us

CONTACT:
Jessica Chittenden
518-457-3136

FOR RELEASE:
Immediately, Tuesday
July 21, 2009

DAIRY POWER PROJECT COMING TO NEW YORK STATE Pilot Program will Create Clean Energy from Dairy Farms and Cut Greenhouse Gases

New York State Agriculture Commissioner Patrick Hooker and New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) President and CEO Francis J. Murray, Jr. today announced that New York State has been selected to host the Dairy Power Project, a pilot project coordinated by the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy, which will aid New York's dairy farms with managing manure waste.

The goal of the project is to set a national model for using methane digesters on dairy farms as a means of creating electricity and thereby reducing the farm's carbon footprint. Successful use of this technology has the potential to reduce the dairy industry's greenhouse gas emissions by 25 percent by 2020 which is equivalent to removing 1.25 million passenger cars off the road every year.

"New York is committed to leading the nation in the production of clean energy and fighting climate change," said Governor David A. Paterson. "Harnessing the waste from dairy farms to produce energy is an effective method of capitalizing on an existing resource to help us meet our '45 by 15' clean energy goal. We are pleased to have been chosen for this pilot project, and look forward to the positive benefits for our dairy farmers and the environment."

Methane digesters capture naturally occurring methane gas from stored manure and convert it into electricity. Methane is a potent greenhouse gas – 21 times more potent than carbon dioxide – which contributes to global warming. Methane digesters effectively reduce greenhouse gas emissions by reducing the amount of methane released into the air and by also providing an alternative energy source to fossil fuels.

Currently, digester adoption in the U.S. has been limited by economic, institutional, technological and cultural barriers. This project will address those barriers and will coordinate efforts amongst the dairy and energy industries to help shape government regulations and conduct a market assessment to identify and prioritize regions with the greatest opportunity for methane digester adoption.

The Innovation Center will convene stakeholders at a Dairy Power Summit in Syracuse on October 29 and 30, 2009 to discuss a common vision and commit to a strategy and set of projects to reach the Center's ambitious goal and make the adoption of methane digesters in New York a reality. Dairy producers, utility companies, milk cooperatives, digester developers, financial

institutions, academia, and representatives from local, state and federal governments will all be invited to attend the Summit.

New York State has 6,200 dairy farms with over 600,000 dairy cows. Currently, only 10,000 cows are utilized in energy production through the use of 12 installed methane digesters that produce 1.3 megawatts of energy in New York. There are an additional 19 methane digesters waiting to be installed on New York dairy farms that would utilize 23,000 additional cows and have the potential to produce 7.6 megawatts of energy.

New York State Agriculture Commissioner Patrick Hooker said, “New York was a logical choice for this project as we are the third largest dairy state, we have a Governor that recognizes the importance of clean energy and we have the policies in place to embrace the technology. With less than two percent of our cows contributing to anaerobic digesters, this project will help us identify the remaining institutional barriers to making this technology more user-friendly and accessible for dairy producers in New York State.”

Francis J. Murray, Jr. President and CEO of the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) noted NYSEDA’s partnership with Department of Agriculture and Markets in support of the methane-to-power program: “Over the years, NYSEDA has co-funded dozens of studies and installations of digesters. Through this concerted effort, the Governor is making it easier for farms to utilize digesters, and it means that we can put some of this state’s 600,000 dairy cows on double duty – not only creating nutritious products, but also generating clean energy.”

Rick Naczi, Executive Vice President of Strategic Insights and Analysis for Dairy Management Inc. (DMI) said, “This summit is truly an opportunity for not only New York State to be a leader in environmental stewardship and to be a model for the rest of world, but will also promote the advancement of alternative anaerobic technologies for manure management by providing a positive environmental and economical return to the dairy producer and the community.”

The Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy is an organization that brings together the leadership of nearly 70 percent of the dairy supply chain, including farmer organizations, dairy cooperatives, processors and manufacturers, and brands. For more information on the Dairy Power Summit, please contact Ron Rausch at New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets at 518-457-2771.

Governor Paterson’s ‘45 by 15’ program is one of the nation’s most aggressive energy efficiency and renewable energy initiatives. By 2015, New York State will receive 45 percent of its electricity through energy efficiency and clean renewable energy – 15 percent electricity savings from efficiency measures and 30 percent met by renewables. It is conservatively estimated that this program will create 50,000 new jobs throughout the State.

###