

NRBP Monthly Report July 13, 2001

NRBP Conducts Briefing on Ethanol Production for Pennsylvania Farm Bureau

The NRBP was invited by the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau to provide a briefing on ethanol use and production potential in Pennsylvania. The nearly four hour briefing was attended by the Farm Bureau's ethanol subcommittee, and members of the state corn growers. The briefing covered multiple topics including:

- An Introduction to Ethanol and Its By-Products
- Policy/Regulatory Issues on Environment and Taxes
- Current Production and Utilization
- Economics Affecting Production and Use
- Regional/State Differences to be Considered
- Producer Involvement in Developing Plants
- Funding Assistance and Sources
- Exploratory Activities in Other States and Update of State Ethanol Activity
- Plans for Ethanol Conferences in Pennsylvania

The briefing was based on the NRBP's publication "An Ethanol Production Guidebook for Northeast States." Each member of the subcommittee was given a copy of the guidebook and a copy of "Ethanol Fact", the northeast edition. The briefing is the second joint activity between the Farm Bureau and the NRBP on ethanol. In May the NRBP provided the Farm Bureau with a discussion guide on ethanol production and use in Pennsylvania. The discussion guide is scheduled to be distributed to Farm Bureau members statewide in July.

New Hampshire Host First Biomass Advisory Group Meeting

The New Hampshire Governor's Office of Energy and Community Services (ECS) held a Biomass Advisory Group Meeting on June 15, 2001. The meeting was chaired by Joe Broyles NRBP state biomass representative. Participating organizations included: NH Department of Resources and Economic Development, Forests and Lands; Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests; NH Department of Environmental Services, Emissions Reductions Trading Program; Innovative Natural Resources Solutions; UNH Cooperative Extension; NH Timberland Owners Association; and Resource Conservation Network/WasteCap of NH.

In NH, "Biomass" means wood- for power, paper, heating, lumber. There was brief discussion or mention of other biomass sources such as various wood and fiber crops, ethanol, and landfill gas. Within wood as biomass, the dominant issue, with considerable agreement, is survival of the wood-fired power plants. Some major points regarding the plants:

- Due to current high rate orders many people are against anything that would help those power plants.

- Common misunderstanding: Belief that those who want to keep the wood-fired plants alive intend to do so at current prices for wood-fired electricity; people confuse price with cost.
- If wood-fired plants are to be saved, it will be necessary for all relevant state agencies to stay coordinated in their views and actions regarding the plants.

Forests support a huge indigenous industry in the State. Keeping wood plants going helps keep jobs, forests, private forest owners and money in the State. Fragmentation of forests and ownerships is detrimental. Loss of good market for forest products leads to both. The advisory group reached general agreement that it needs more financial information, and other numerical information on the costs, benefits and externalities including environmental impacts of wood-fired power plants compared with other sources of electricity. The group agreed to meet again in the fall.

Vermont conducts training for western forest on biomass energy

The success of wood energy projects in Vermont has attracted the interest of the U.S. Forest Service and many western state communities threatened by catastrophic forest fires. The NRBP's host organization in Vermont teamed with the Biomass Energy Resource Center, Inc., (BERC) to conduct a three day field training for National Forest Service staff and community officials from New Mexico, Idaho, Montana and Arizona on community biomass energy systems. The Vermont hosts took the ten western visitors on field visits to wood heated schools, housing developments, state office buildings and a National Guard base. The group also visited harvesting and processing sites and held a forum on policy issues. The training was funded by a grant from the National Forest Service.

Renewable Diesel Planning meeting held in New York

The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Fuels Development, and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory hosted a planning meeting for a state workshop on renewable diesel. The meeting, attended by representatives of state agencies, biodiesel producers, and petroleum marketers, has been charged with planning a workshop on renewable diesel for this fall. The workshop is patterned after successful workshops conducted by the Office of Fuels Development and the Regional Biomass Programs on ethanol. BBI International is under contract to NREL to handle workshop logistics.

A tentative early November date has been set for the workshop which will be held in Albany, NY.

NRBP to host briefing on animal waste projects

Problems related to animal waste management, due to the proliferation of concentrated animal feedlot operations, have long been recognized by states. Existing as well as proposed regulations by the U.S. EPA are expected to significantly increase the number of facilities required to obtain National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits and would restrict land application of

wastes. These regulations would require states to permit up to 39,000 concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) across the country. Today, about 2,500 facilities have permits. In addition to water quality and nutrient management concerns, other important environmental concerns regarding animal waste management include emissions of greenhouse gases, odor problems, pathogens, ammonia emissions, as well as impacts of hormones and antibiotics in effluents. Given this array of environmental concerns, animal farmers have a critical need to find new innovative solutions that can be economically integrated into future animal waste management practices. Production of biobased products or energy from animal waste could play a key role in facilitating improved animal waste management approaches.

The NRBP has organized a July 25, 2001, briefing on animal waste energy projects in the northeast. The briefing will include DOE sponsored work in Maryland on poultry litter, the Vermont Methane Demonstration Project, and animal waste energy projects being supported by NYSERDA in New York.

NRBP to Conduct RPS SBC study

The electricity deregulation process in each northeastern state has proceeded uniquely, but most public utility commissions and/or state legislatures in the region have made provision for set aside funds to finance renewable electricity technologies. Justified for a variety of reasons, including local economic development, national security, fuel diversity, and environmental mitigation, the renewable funds should stimulate the development of new power plants. The dilemmas facing biomass developers are four-fold: (1) biomass feedstocks and technologies are not treated similarly in different states; (2) some biomass feedstocks which have been utilized in the past are not considered eligible as "sustainable" or as "low emissions"; (3) certain technologies, including LFG, are not classified as favorably as are other renewable technologies; and (4) the definitions of biomass feedstocks and technologies are not consistent.

The major objective of this project is to provide policymakers and those who may influence policymakers with accurate, timely information which may facilitate the adoption of a greater range of environmentally acceptable biomass feedstocks and technologies in the electricity mix among the northeastern states. Secondary objectives include the gathering and analysis of existing RPS and SBC programs to compile a roster of specific opportunities to improve the standing of biomass; the marshaling of emissions, performance, and resource availability information which supports the inclusion of additional feedstocks and technologies utilizing biomass; consistency in definitions, standards and eligibility criteria; and the dissemination of this information to stakeholders who can change existing eligibility standards and requirements which now may unduly circumscribe the potential for biomass to contribute to renewable energy needs over the next two decades. For more information you can review the full request for proposals at www.nrbp.org

Call For Posters For Northeast Agroforestry and Carbon Conference

Posters are now being accepted for the Northeast Agroforestry and Carbon Conference, October 2 - 4, 2001 in Binghamton, NY. The theme of the conference is "Balancing a Healthy Forest with

Income Generation, and Considering Carbon in Northeast Forest Land." Topics include; maintaining forest health, forest carbon sequestration, non-lumber forest products (maple syrup, ginseng, honey, mushrooms, tourism, etc.), tax and policy issues, riparian buffer strips, energy crops and more. The conference is being hosted by Hudson Mohawk RC&D, Central New York RC&D, and Mid-State RC&D. Sponsors include USDA-National Agroforestry Center, Center for Agricultural Development and Entrepreneurship, New York Federation of RC&D Councils, Pennsylvania Association of RC&D Councils, USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service and Watershed Agricultural Council. Additional support has been provided by Catskill Forestry Association, Cornell University and Cooperative Extension, Penn State University, SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry and US Forest Service. Deadline for submission of abstracts is August 17, 2001. Abstracts should be submitted by email to Stacie Edick at stacie.edick@ny.usda.gov. Notification of accepted posters will be made by August 24. Deadline for Early Bird registration at the conference is August 31. Poster presenters **NEED TO REGISTER AND PAY REGISTRATION FEE** for the conference. One-day registrations are available. See www.syrmeetings.com/agro for more information.

Delmarva Carbon Sequestration Workshop

The US Department of Agriculture and the First State Resource Conservation and Development Council, Inc., are sponsoring a carbon sequestration workshop Thursday August 23, 2001, at the Modern Maturity Center Dover, Delaware. The workshop topics will include:

- What is carbon sequestration;
- How will farmers, foresters, and land managers be involved; and
- What can agriculture do to help?

Invited speakers at the workshop include: Neil Sampson, The Sampson Group; Jeri Berc, USDA/NRCS; Jim Kinsella, an Illinois farmer; and Gerald Talbert, independent consultant to the National Association of Conservation Districts. For more information contact Bill Bell, First State RC&D Coordinator at (302) 678-4169.