

NRBP Monthly Report December 7, 2001

NRBP Resurrects Biomass Brown Bag Lunches

The NRBP is once again host to Washington, DC "Biomass Brown Bag Lunches." The lunches are held about once a month at the Hall of States building at 400-444 N. Capitol Street NW, one block from Union Station. The brown bag is an informal discussion among Washington area people interested in bioenergy and bioproduct development. Brown bag lunches have been held at various times and places in DC over the past several years. There is no agenda, the Brown Bag is an opportunity to share ideas and learn what others are doing in the bioenergy and bioproducts arena. Anyone interested in being put on an e-mail notification list for the brown bag should contact Rick Handley at rhandley@capital.net.

Biomass Gasification RFP

The U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Industrial Technologies announced it's intent to request proposals for Black Liquor/Biomass Gasification Technology Support Research and Development. DOE is particularly interested in industrial application demonstrations. 5 - 10 awards are expected, ranging from \$500K - \$1.5 million. Cost share from 20 - 50% will be required, depending on project type. It was expected that the solicitation will open in mid 12/01. For more info, contact Deborah Boggs at (304) 285-4473 or go to: <http://e-center.doe.gov>. Refer to Sol# DE-PS26-02NT41423 (Federal Register 11/23/01).

Fuel Cell Workshop

The NRBP has been working with the New Hampshire Business and Industry Association, Keyspan Energy, the New Hampshire Governor's Office of Energy and Community Services, and others to plan a workshop intended to introduce fuel cell technology to commercial and industrial businesses in New England. Fuel Cell technology could provide many benefits to New England. Fuel Cells can provide clean, quiet, and reliable power, and have been identified in some state renewable portfolios as a technology to be supported. Since several major fuel cell manufactures are located in New England, the development of the technology could have a significant impact on the region's economy. Early and near-term adopters of fuel cell technology will use natural gas as a hydrogen source for fuel cells. The NRBP is involved in the workshop to promote the potential to use biomass fuels as a source of hydrogen for fuel cells in the mid to long term. Given the abundant biomass resources in the Northeast and the opportunities for distributed and remote power applications, biomass fuels may be a good fit with fuels cells in the near future. The NRBP has completed a draft white paper on the interface between biomass fuels and fuel cell technology that will be the basis for a technical discussion of biomass fuels and fuel cells at the workshop. For more information contact the NRBP or the New Hampshire Business and Industry Association at (603) 224-5388.

Connecticut to hold first Working Group Meeting

The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will host the state's first biomass working group meeting December 12, 2001, at DEP headquarters in Hartford. Thirty participants are expected representing state agencies, technology developers, project developers, the state's Clean Energy Trust Fund, utilities, and representatives from the state legislature. The NRBP's director and the DOE Boston Regional Office will present information on the resource potential for biomass in the state and give an overview of the DOE Regional Biomass Program. The first meeting will also include a session on biomass in Connecticut led by Jane Slupecki from the Department of Agriculture, Subhash Chandra lead for biomass technology at the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund, and Joel Gordes, a former state legislator who was also a former NRBP state biomass representative. The state's first working group meeting will concluded with a discussion session designed to set working group goals and objectives.

The NRBP has set a goal to establish a biomass working groups in each of it eleven states by June 30, 2002. Currently six states have active working groups and the remaining five are in process. The state working groups are a valuable tool for raising the visibility and promoting the potential for bioenergy development within the state.

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau Makes Recommendations for Ethanol Development

The Pennsylvania Farm Bureau adopted several ethanol related policies at its November Annual Meeting. The NRBP has worked closely with the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau's ethanol subcommittee and the NRBP's director has served as an technical resource at subcommittee meetings. Last year the NRBP produced a four page discussion brief on ethanol that was sent to over 750 farm bureau members in the state. The NRBP has also made presentations to farm bureau members on ethanol over the last six months.

The recommendations were:

- The Farm Bureau develop an information program on ethanol and bio-diesel processes, owner options (such as farmer co-op), co-generation, and other related topics.
- A state committee be established to look into the benefits and liabilities of developing a regional ethanol co-op.
- The Farm Bureau does a public relations program to inform members, politicians, other groups and the general public about the value of using renewable fuels such as ethanol and bio-diesel.

- That federal, state and local government:
 - provide start up monies, grants, tax credits and other incentives to assist in making renewable fuels available and to attract investors and operators of renewable fuels production facilities in Pennsylvania and the U.S.;
 - encourage use of renewable and reformulated fuels in all vehicles including both government and privately owned vehicles as they become available and feasible;
 - expand research and development for renewable fuels and their production;
 - expand efforts to educate the public on the benefits of renewable fuels use; and
 - provide state tax incentives for ethanol reformulated fuels to match federal tax incentives.
- State and federal government favor renewable energy over nuclear energy development in government development projects.
- That ethanol replace methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE).
- That all motor fuels sold in Pennsylvania contain a percentage of renewable fuels.
- Establishment of a regional Ethanol Task Force of representatives of interested farm organizations, support agencies and ethanol planning groups from Pennsylvania and surrounding states to coordinate information and activities to enhance the use, production and marketing of ethanol, bio-diesel and their co-products in our region.

Massachusetts Agencies to Study Biomass Power Plant

The Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) and the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) have discussed the possibility of building a power plant to supply the MWRA electric needs for a new ozone water treatment plant in Northboro, MA. The NRBP has been invited to participate in some of the discussions between the two agencies. The ozone treatment plant would have an electric demand of around 8 megawatts. A biomass plant would provide a market for forest thinnings on land managed by the MDC and additional biomass from private lands which desperately need markets for low-value forest thinnings.

Delaware Biomass Consortium Holds Ethanol Briefing

The Delaware Biomass Consortium (one of the NRBP's state working groups) held an ethanol briefing for state officials federal representatives and grain producers in Delaware on November 30, 2001, in Dover, Delaware. The goal of the meeting was to provide information on; how

ethanol fits into the national transportation fuel picture; federal and state policies driving the ethanol market; and activities in neighboring states. Presentations were followed by an open discussion on what is Delaware's role in ethanol production and use. Featured speakers included Bob Dinneen, President of the Renewable Fuels Association, and Peter Fury, Executive Director of the New Jersey Farm Bureau.

Delaware grain production includes; 25 million bushels of corn per year, over 9 million bushels of soybeans, over 4 million bushels of wheat, and over 2 million bushels of barley. The largest single market for grain in Delaware is for poultry feed. Last year Delaware poultry producers produced nearly a quarter of a billion chickens (247.7 million). In the near term it is unlikely that grain production in Delaware would support an ethanol plant. Delaware grain producers could participate in ethanol development outside the state. During the discussion session that followed the presentations the following points were raised:

- initial efforts into developing ethanol plants will probably be regional, meaning that producers in several states will participate;
- in order to generate broad public support for ethanol development, northeast and mid-Atlantic producers will need to benefit; and
- new crops and or cropping cycles could be integrated with ethanol production to provide producers with increased value for rotation crops.

Ethanol Development Interest Strong in Northeast States

Spurred by MTBE bans and hopes ethanol plants will provide increased profits to grain producers, as many as eight groups have taken steps to evaluate the potential for ethanol production in the Northeast. The NRBP has contacted each of the groups and offered any assistance it can provide within it technical and financial resources.

Maine

A study by BBI sponsored by the Finance Authority of Maine and NREL is underway to look at the feasibility of an ethanol facility that would use cellulose and possibly starch waste from potato processing. A final report is due by the end of the year.

Maryland

The Maryland Grain Producers Utilization Board has completed a pre feasibility study of ethanol production using barley. That study found that a dry mill ethanol plant using barley could be feasible.

New Jersey

Led by the New Jersey Farm Bureau, Rutgers University, the New Jersey Grain and Forage Growers, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, and a group of dedicated farmers, an effort called Garden State Ethanol has emerged. Not yet incorporated, the group has hired professional staff and opened an office at the New Jersey EcoComplex in Bordentown, NJ. Over the past two years the group has completed a pre feasibility and full feasibility study for a dry mill ethanol facility to be located somewhere in the mid-Atlantic region. Site selection is underway as is an effort to educate producers in the mid-Atlantic about the project.

New York

In August 1998, the New York Corn Growers released a paper on the Economic and Environmental Value of Establishing an Ethanol Production Industry in New York State. The report called for a feasibility study to be completed. In 2000, the New York State Technology Enterprise Corp and NREL completed a study of the feasibility of a cellulose ethanol plant in New York. That study found that a cellulose-to-ethanol plant was not feasible at this time. Following up on the recommendation in the 1998 Corn Growers report, a detailed study was supported by the Development Authority of the North Country for a detailed economic analysis of a producer cooperative that would use corn and cheese whey. That study found that an integrated corn and cheese whey plant with a strong market for Distillers Dried Grains sold to the dairy industry coupled with a strong market for carbon dioxide could be successful. Three groups in the state are currently looking at possible sites and business arrangements.

Pennsylvania

Grain Producers in western and south central Pennsylvania are holding informational sessions on the possibility of forming producer co-ops and one or more dry mill ethanol facilities. In addition Jones Brewery in Smithtown, is investigating an LLC to produce ethanol in northwest Pennsylvania. Producers in York and Lancaster Pennsylvania have been working with York County and regional economic development groups to conduct a feasibility study of building a dry mill ethanol plant. Leaders of the York group have held informal discussions with Garden State Ethanol to evaluate possible cooperative venture. The Pennsylvania Farm Bureau has been working to encourage producers to seek the opportunity that will have the greatest likelihood of success. In western Pennsylvania producers in Mercer, Erie, and Crawford counties have raised the possibility of an ethanol production. Butler county has teamed with Jones Brewery and ethanol plant builder Delta-T to evaluate the potential for a dry mill ethanol plant in an industrial park in Butler county. The NRBP has been invited to help organize a meeting of interested producers in western Pennsylvania.