

NRBP Monthly Report October 1, 2002

Upcoming Meetings, Workshops, and Conferences

Rhode Island Biomass Working Group Meeting, October 4, 2002, in Providence, Rhode Island.
Contact Julie Capobianco (juliec@gw.doa.state.ri.us).

Renewable Energy Vermont Conference, October 8, 2002 in Montpelier, VT.
Contact Andrew Perchlik (perchlik@REVermont.org).

Pennsylvania Biomass Working Group meeting October 17.
Contact David Bingaman (dbingaman@state.pa.us).

Wood Energy Day October 19, 2002, in Jaffery, NH. Hosted by New England Wood Pellet
Contact Woody Keeney (keeney@pelleheat.com).

NRBP Conducts Bio-oil Briefing

The Northeast Regional Biomass Program, in conjunction with the USDA Forest Service, the U.S. DOE Office of Biomass Programs, and the New Hampshire Governor's Office of Energy and Community Services, hosted a briefing by private sector technology companies engaged in the development/sale of bio-oil production technology. The briefing was held on August 16, 2002, in Concord, New Hampshire, at the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests. Bio-oil is a renewable "carbon neutral" fuel made from biomass resources. Interest in bio-oil production is driven in part by the perception that future bio-oil production facilities may provide a market for biomass feedstocks, such as forest residues and energy crops, and therefore can be a stimulus for rural economic development and provide a source of domestic energy production.

The briefing was organized primarily by the Northeast Regional Biomass Program with assistance from the New Hampshire Governor's Office of Energy and Community Services and Natural Resources Canada. Financial assistance was provided by the USDA Forest Service and the U.S. DOE Office of Biomass Programs. Over 75 people representing key organizations in New Hampshire and the Northeast were invited to the briefing. The invitees included state and federal government officials, university researchers, forest products companies, and economic development professionals. These organizations were selected because they were thought to be critical to any future potential demonstration of bio-oil production and market development. Their input would be valuable.

To further emphasize the importance of what bio-oil could mean to the region, the briefing was opened by New Hampshire's Governor, the Honorable Jeanne Shaheen. Governor Shaheen's remarks underscored the value of renewable energy to New Hampshire and the Northeast. Governor Shaheen stressed the urgent need to develop alternative fuels to help reduce the nation's dependence on foreign oil, provide a boost to New Hampshire's economy and reduce air pollution. A brief summary of the meeting will be available this month on NRBP's web site at www.nrbp.org.

NRBP Presents Two Awards at Bioenergy 2002

The U. S. Department of Energy's Regional Biomass Energy Program established the Bioenergy Awards Program to recognize and honor individuals and organizations that have over the years exemplified the highest professional standards while advancing the use of renewable biomass technologies and feedstocks. Every two years the regional programs present the awards at Bioenergy. This year at Bioenergy 2002, in Boise, ID the Northeast Regional Biomass Program honored the following:

Industry or Non-Profit Category – Peter Arnold / Chewonki Foundation

Under the guidance of Peter Arnold, the Chewonki Foundation has been a leader in demonstrating the production and use of biofuels. The Chewonki Foundation, an environmental education and research group located in Wiscasset, Maine, has been making biodiesel from waste vegetable oil and using it in the Foundation's vehicles and boiler. Chewonki provides tours and information on request, and has provided a valuable opportunity for State policy makers and the public to see production and use of biodiesel first hand. Also, under Mr. Arnold's direction Chewonki will be producing ethanol for use in flex-fuel vehicles. These projects demonstrate that anyone, anywhere, can help protect the environment and reduce dependence on imported energy.

State Agency or Employee Category – Dave Bingaman / Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture

Dave Bingaman has displayed exemplary performance in building a state bioenergy program in Pennsylvania. Dave has demonstrated a willingness to go above and beyond the expectations set by the NRBP and brings a valuable agriculture expertise to the NRBP's steering committee. In a few short years since taking over as the NRBP's state representative, Dave helped to organize an RBEP Ethanol Workshop. A year later, he led a team that hosted the first two Ethanol for Rural America conferences, which set the standard for those that followed. As a result of these well-attended and highly-praised workshops, interest in ethanol has continued to grow in the Commonwealth, with several areas of the state expressing an interest in building an ethanol plant. Dave has also worked to maintain several energy crop demonstrations for willow and switchgrass, and he was also a central figure in Pennsylvania being selected by the USDA as one of six pilot projects to demonstrate energy crops on CRP lands. Dave has established the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture as the focal point for bioenergy development in the Commonwealth, and continues to strengthen partnerships with Pennsylvania state agencies and organizations in support of bioenergy development.

The NRBP congratulates all of the winners.

NRBP, NREL Co-Host Briefing on Biodiesel from “Brown Grease”

The NRBP held a conference call briefing on “Producing Biodiesel From Brown Grease”. The briefing was co-hosted by the NRBP and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) and conducted by Dr. Shaine Tyson of NREL.

Dr. Tyson gave a one-hour briefing and was available for an additional one-half hour for questions. Producing biodiesel from brown grease (collected from grease traps and waste treatment plants) provides a low cost or zero cost feedstock. Making a quality biodiesel product from brown grease does present challenges. Dr. Tyson discussed those challenges, as well as work that is currently being done to demonstrate brown grease biodiesel production. Dr. Tyson’s Power Point slides will be available this month on the NRBP's web site.

At its steering committee meeting in Manchester, NH, the NRBP’s steering committee asked that the NRBP conduct more education sessions for steering committee members and indicated that it would like more emphasis placed on biodiesel. The NRBP is experimenting with conference call briefings as a convenient way to educate the steering committee, and others. This technique will allow the NRBP to conduct briefings on key topics with a minimum time commitment for the steering committee member, with no travel required, and to get information out quickly on critical topics.