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BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES
“PRODUCTION & COMBUSTION CHAINS”

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In most European countries, the market integration of alternative biomass pellets (e.g. made of straw, agricultural or food processing residues) is still hindered by various constraints. To overcome these constraints and to strengthen the drivers, promising market introduction concepts will be identified to enhance the relevance of alternative pellets in Europe. Thus, the MixBioPells project provides up-to-date market information for alternative and mixed biomass pellets based on a comprehensive data collection for representative European countries and regions (see above) which are available at

www.mixbiopells.eu
Background

Køge Biopellet Factory is a pellet producing plant built in 2004 by the utility company Energi E2. It was built as 2 plants, one producing wood pellets with a capacity of 180,000 tons/year, the other producing straw pellets with a capacity of 110,000 tons/year. The pellets was planned to be used in 2 power plants in Copenhagen: Wood pellets at Avedøre power plant and straw pellets at Amager power plant. It was not allowed by Copenhagen municipality to take this large amount of trucks daily into central Copenhagen. Therefore Energi E2 built the pellet plant 45 kilometers outside Copenhagen by Køge Harbour, and the pellets are then shipped into Copenhagen by boat. In 2006 Vattenfall A/S took over the straw pellet plant. The wood pellet plant, was stopped in 2007.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pelletizing straw</th>
<th>Køge Biopellet Factory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technology type</td>
<td>Ring die</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production capacity, t/a</td>
<td>110,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price of pellets, €/MWh</td>
<td>See below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment, €</td>
<td>See below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The investment in 2004 for both the wood pellet plant and the straw pellet plant was 50 million Euro (Source: Forskning i Bioenergi, nr. 3, 2004). The straw pellets are not sold in a commercial market, because all pellets are used inhouse at Vattenfall A/S. This means that there is no market price for straw pellets in Denmark. There is no information about the production costs.

Raw material

The raw material is straw in big bales of approx. 530 kg each. They are delivered by farmers at Zealand and nearby Islands with a maximum distance of about 140 km. The toll bridges to Sweden and to Funen are barrierers as the toll is at least 160 Euro for a truck, making the business unprofitable for the farmers. The truck takes 24 bales, 12 on the truck and 12 on the trailer in 2 layers. The second raw material is grain screenings delivered in bulk.

Truck with 24 bales waiting for unloading.

The 24 straw bales are unloaded by a crane taking 12 bales in one lift. During the lift off the water content is measured by micro waves and the weight is measured.

Characteristics of raw material

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw material</th>
<th>Straw</th>
<th>Grain screenings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moisture content, wt-%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heating value, MJ/kg</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulk density, kg/m³</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ash content, wt-%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ash melting temperature, °C</td>
<td>870</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of biomass, €/t</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantity, t/a ¹</td>
<td>800,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Straw available for combustion on Zealand is around 800,000 tons

Pelletizing process

The pellet production runs 24 hours a day reaching around 300 tons/24 hours. There are 4 pellet lines. There is no drying unit for the raw material in the process line. The ratio of grain screenings mixed with straw depends on what is available. The maximum ratio of grain screenings is 20 %.

Transport & storage

The produced pellets are transported by a long conveyor belt to the harbour to a bulk storage waiting for ship transport to Amagerværket in Copenhagen.
Vattenfall A/S has more than 40 CHP plants in operation, which partly or totally are fired with biomass. Every year the biomass consumption exceeds 3 million tons, and the amount is increasing. Vattenfall A/S is one of the world’s leading companies in the energy sector.

Contact:
Vattenfall A/S
Støberigade 14
DK 2450 København SV
Phone+45 8827 5000

Amagerværket in Copenhagen is a very large Power Plant supporting the city with district heating and electricity. The plant is designed for both coal and biomass and has advanced flue gas cleaning systems.
Production and combustion of mixed biomass pellets at Pusch AG within the "agrarSTICK®" concept

Background
The PUSCH AG provides a comprehensive concept for the decentralized production of mixed biomass pellets from agricultural and woody raw materials. Based on the licensed concept “agrarSTICK®” different license holders are producing and marketing alternative pellets based on specific recipes. Thus, these partners are provided with complete production, combustion, sales and logistics support based on a virtual trading platform for all internal and external business activities. Based on the „produced in and for the region“-philosophy, the agrarSTICK® will be distributed in the respective region.

Raw materials
So far, mixtures from herbaceous and woody biomass as well as fruit residues have been pelletized. Since characteristics and potential of the available raw materials differ significantly between the regions, a suitable combination of different raw materials and additives has to be developed. Due to the fact that the pelletizing plant PM 6-28 has low requirements on mechanical properties and water content usually no pre-treatment of the raw material is necessary. To ensure a transparent communication with the customers a fuel data sheet will be provided from the production partner.

Pelletizing process
In contrast to pelletizing processes with roller dies a hydraulic press offers less work and cost intensive pretreatment of the raw materials. Therefore, the production of different mixed biomass pellets can be done without changing the press die. The Pusch AG has developed and manufactured the pelletizing plant PM 6-28 applying the hydraulic press concept and a production capacity of 1,000 kg/h. The modular design allows an increase of the production capacity to 4,000 kg/h.

PM 6-28
The benefits of the technology are:
- User-defined pellets from a mixture of raw materials can be produced.
- Raw materials with residual moisture up to 30 wt.-% can be used.
- No additional grinding (e. g. hammer mill) or pre-treatment processes are necessary for raw materials with a length up to 5 cm.
- The production energy is reduced by an efficient plant technology.
- Rotating parts are not installed in dirty parts of the pelletizing plant.

Two different products are offered by PUSCH AG - the agrarSTICK® black for the utilisation in public and small industrial combustion plants above 100 kW and the agrarSTICK® yellow for small combustion plants.

Miscanthus pellets
At the moment digestates, Miscanthus, grape marc and wood are the most interesting raw materials. The fuel characteristics are listed in the following Table:
Different combustion plants and precipitator technologies are available at Pusch AG to test and optimise the fuel pellets produced within the “agrarSTICK®” concept. Depending on the origin of the raw materials, the critical parameters of the fuel are often high nitrogen, chlorine and sulphur contents causing higher gaseous emissions of NOx, SO2 and HCl. Furthermore, higher contents of alkaline metals such as K and Na can cause increased dust emissions which can be lowered by the use of electrostatic precipitators.

Combustion appliance PH 47 (left, www.ph-energy.dk) and dust precipitator Schräder Al Top (right, www.schraeder.com)

Therefore, fuel optimisation and an adapted combustion technology are required which is offered by Pusch AG within the “agrarSTICK®” concept. In the following Table, results from the combustion tests with several fuel pellets in a combustion appliance of PH, Type PH47 with a nominal heat output of 47 kW and a precipitator of Schräder, Type Al Top are listed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>GM</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diameter</td>
<td>mm</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moisture content</td>
<td>wt.-%</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>9.78</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net calorific value</td>
<td>MJ/kg (d.b.)</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>20.78</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ash content</td>
<td>wt.-% (d.b.)</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>7.86</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cl</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>1.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

M – Miscanthus, GM – Grape marc, D – Digestates, W – Wood, d.b. – dry basis, n.a. – not analysed

**Costumers**

Costumers are both the license holders and operators of small and medium scale combustion plants. Based on the license concept “agrarSTICK®” different license holders are producing and marketing alternative pellets based on specific recipes. Based on the „produced in and for the region“-philosophy, the agrarSTICK® will be distributed in the respective region.

**Challenges for the future**

Important aspects for hindering an enhanced market relevance of regional mixed biomass pellets are:

- The requirements of the target groups regarding the optimal (regional) mixture are often unknown.
- The technical know-how of the key actors for production of alternative and mixed biomass pellets is too less.
- So far, regional market structures do mostly not exist.

By 2020 a production of 1,000,000 t / a alternative and mixed biomass pellets with 60 to 90 partners is planned by building up a decentralized production network which will be coordinated by Pusch AG.

**Contact**

Auf der Weid 1–15
56242 Marienrachdorf
Phone: +49 (0) 2626/92569-0
Fax: +49 (0) 2626/92569-27
www.pusch.ag · www.agrarstick.de
Production and combustion of grape marc pellets and blends with vine pruning in small scale appliances

Background

In Germany, the total energetic potential of residues from the viticulture is approx. 4.9 PJ including approx. 265,000 t/a grape marc and 318,000 t/a vine pruning. This means an oil equivalent of approx. 135 million litres and CO₂ savings of 354,000 t/a. In terms of recycling management, a marketable product should be created to improve the economic status and to offer new job opportunities in rural areas. Based on these political and economic objectives, RLP AgroScience GmbH is developing and realising new processes for the energetic use of solid wastes, residues from viticulture and vegetable gardening contributing to a circular flow economy. The European patent EP 1783195B1 (Process for making fuel from grape marc, particularly in pellet form) is held by AgroScience GmbH.

Figure 1: Grape marc residues (above) and pellets made of 70% grape marc / 30% vine pruning pellets (bottom)

Production of grape marc pellets

Viniculture produces on average 2.5 t of grape marc with a dry matter content of approx. 41 % and 3 t of vine pruning with a dry matter content of 50 %. Grape marc is a heterogeneous mixture which generally consists of solid components such as grape skins, kernels and peduncles. The amount, consistency and quality depend on the pre-treatment of the grape and mash, the type of grape, the weather and stage of maturity as well as putrescence. Utilisation of residues from viticulture as fertiliser to cover losses in humus soil is possible only to limited extend. The main reasons are the seasonal and short availability and the increased risk of further fermentation, rot and the related formation of odour, seepage water and mycotoxins resulting from composting. Thus, excess amounts of these raw materials are available and can be pelletised for energy production running through the following steps:

- Cleaning and storage of the grape marc.
- Drying of the cleaned grape marc by using mechanical drainage and thermal drying.
- Crushing of the dried grape marc with mechanical release of the grape seed oil contained in the grape seeds.
- Pelletizing of the crushed grape marc by using a ring die press (Friedli AG, CLM200) and some grape seed oil as additive.

Grape marc pellets and blends with vine pruning can fulfill the requirements of the draft of the European standard for solid biofuels (EN 14961-6). The quality parameters of pellets from grape marc and mixtures with vine pruning (ratio: 70/30 Vol.-%) are listed in the following Table:
**Typical fuel properties of grape marc pellets**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Grape marc</th>
<th>Blend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical durability</td>
<td>wt.-%</td>
<td>92 - 95</td>
<td>94 - 98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of fines</td>
<td>wt.-%</td>
<td>5 - 8</td>
<td>2 - 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulk density</td>
<td>kg/m³</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moisture content</td>
<td>wt.-%</td>
<td>10 - 13</td>
<td>10 - 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net calorific value</td>
<td>MJ/kg</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ash melting temperature</td>
<td>°C</td>
<td>910</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ash content</td>
<td>wt.-% (dry basis)</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>1.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Combustion at Agroscience**

A demonstration of the technical and economic feasibility for the combustion of blended grape marc pellets has been started in March 2011 to guarantee the applicability and facilitate the licensing of the fuel. Therefore, a HARGASSNER AGROFIRE with a nominal heat capacity of 30 kW will provide domestic hot water during summer in addition to an existing 920 kW wood chip boiler for heating.

![Figure 3: Hargassner Agrofire 30 (www.hargassner.at)](image)

First combustion tests have confirmed the usability as solid fuel. The grape marc pellets exhibited a good combustion behaviour.

![Figure 4: Demonstration plant at AgroScience](image)

An advantage is the low proportion of chlorine, which can lead to low formation of HCl-emissions and corrosion. However, there may be problems by increased NOx- and SO2-emissions as a result of increased contents of nitrogen and sulphur in the fuel. Though the nitrogen content in the fuel is rather high preliminary combustion tests resulted in comparatively low NOx emissions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Grape marc</th>
<th>Blend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CO</td>
<td>mg/m³</td>
<td>2,735</td>
<td>825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOx</td>
<td>mg/m³</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Minor slagging tendencies have been observed. However, the impact on the bottom ash removal was negligible. Although dust emission is high, it might be reduced with secondary measures. Additionally, blends with vine prunings can improve the fuel characteristics and combustion behaviour.

**Costs**

It is planned to provide local farmers of Rhineland-Palatinate with the fuel pellets. Additionally, small district heating plants or public buildings such as schools can be supplied. The raw material costs are about 45 €/t incl. storage, transport and drying. The pellet price is about 180 - 200 €/t by using a pelletizing plant with a capacity of 1 t/h and a production of 3,000 t/a. Based on a service life of 12 years and an operation period of 3,600 hours/a the costs for the 30 kW boiler are:

| Total Investment costs [€] | 50,000 |
| Total capital consumptions [€/a] | 4,167 |
| Total running costs [€/a] | 9,420 |
| Total annual cost [€/a] | 13,587 |
| Total costs over service life [€] | 163,050 |

**Challenges for the future**

The major challenges for the future are:

- The implementation of a marketable product in a medium-term period to strengthen sustainable recycling management and rural economics.
- The establishment of a locally licensed fuel according to 1.BImSchV.
- Adaption of combustion appliances for the handling of ash rich fuels.

**Contact**

RLP AgroScience GmbH, Breitenweg 71, 67435 Neustadt a. d. Weinstraße
www.ifa.agroscience.de
Grapevine pellets production and combustion

Introduction

Large quantities of pruning residues from fruit trees, grapevine and olive cultivations are available in Italy. In the northern part of Italy, in particular, the amount of pruning residues (dry matter), mainly grapevine pruning, is estimated to be about 0.7 - 0.8 Mio. t. Particularly, in the Veneto Region, about 70 - 75,000 ha are cultivated with grapevine and produce about 0.1 - 0.12 Mio. t dry matter of biomass residues each year. Thus, regional entrepreneurs involved in agricultural machinery and biomass sectors have developed equipments for harvesting of grapevine pruning and its utilization to produce energy.

Raw material

The grapevine pruning residues are usually collected between January and March. Depending on the harvesting technique, the residues can be baled or shredded; the product is afterwards dried, usually on the sides of the field, until the moisture content reaches about 20 - 25 %. The choice of the different harvesting equipments and technologies is very important because it affects the quality (Table 1) of the product and the following steps: storage, transport and processing of the biomass.

Table 1: typical fuel properties (db... dry basis)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Net calorific value (MJ/kg db)</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ash content (wt.-% db)</td>
<td>2.1 - 3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water content (wt.-%)</td>
<td>35 - 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Softening temperature of ash</td>
<td>&gt; 1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nitrogen (wt.-% db)</td>
<td>0.5 - 0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulphur (wt.-% db)</td>
<td>0.01 - 0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chlorine (wt.-% db)</td>
<td>0.04 - 0.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pelletizing

The pelletizing process of grapevine pruning can be performed in an industrial plant (Produttori Pellet – Colognola ai Colli (VR)) or directly in the farm. In the first case, a hammer mill is used for particle size reduction and to improve the homogeneity. The mill grinds the pruning biomass passing it through a sieve of Ø 8 mm; the grind can be operated when the raw material moisture content is 15 - 18 %; this condition is normally realized after a natural drying period of 3 to 6 months. After that, a belt conveyor transports the refined product to a press (220 kW - 2 t/h) with a ring die (30/6 mm). During the pelletizing process, no additives are used. Pellets are cooled by air and then stored in silos. Finally, the product is packed in one big bag or in different 15 kg bags.

Picture 1: grapevine pruning harvester (left) and pelletizing mobile machinery (right).

Pellets can also be produced directly in the farm using mobile pellet presses and hammer mill machineries (General Dies), directly connected to the PTO of a tractor. The biomass is milled to reduce its size down to Ø 8 mm and then fed in the pellet press (ring die - 6 mm) without using additives. The mechanical quality of this pellet is lower than the industrial pellet but it is an interesting solution to reduce the economic and environmental costs of transport.

Costs

A first assessment indicates a cost of 100 - 120 €/t for the pellet produced by mobile pellettizer. The cost for the industrial pellet is evaluated to 120 – 130 €/t. This estimation doesn't take in consideration the costs of pruning, assuming that the raw material is a residue. During the last winter season (2010), the grapevine pellet prize in the
regional market reached about 150-180 €/t for the different packaging.

**Combustion**

The combustion of alternative pellet causes some problems when used in traditional heating systems, developed for wood pellets. The main problems are: incomplete and not uniform combustion of pellets; low energy efficiency; high quantity of ash produced in the combustion chamber and of pollutants in the flue gas. The most suitable combustion technologies for the alternative pellets are devices with blown air burners or with moving grate. In the first case, the burner separates the gasification phase from the pellet combustion phase and continuously removes the residual ashes. These devices, even of low power (25 kW), can also be implemented in conventional boiler systems, fueled by traditional fossil fuels. The second technology provides a mobile grate where the air distribution system ensures the correct air/fuel ratio needed. The market development of alternative pellets is slow. However, it seems to be continuously growing. Gas emissions were monitored in some small scale boilers. The measured concentration values of CO, NOx, and dust are similar to those of the wood pellet systems and they are generally below the emission thresholds established by the Decree 152/2006 and EN 303-5. However, the results also depend on the abatement systems implemented in the heating device.

**Summary**

In some of the cases considered in the MixBioPells project, the alternative pellet users have shown a high satisfaction. The most important reasons are:

- low cost of the fuel;
- more efficient transport and storage operations;
- better quality in comparison to the traditional solid biomass fuels;
- more efficient heating systems.

However, the operators highlight also some problems. Among them:

- high production of combustion residues (ash) to be frequently removed;
- discontinuous availability of alternative pellets;
- lack of a product quality control;
- difficulties to reduce the emissions in the exhausts of small heating plants.

![Picture 2: Termocabi burner for agri-pellets implemented in a traditional boiler for wood fuels.](image)

Combustion system manufacturers are focusing their attention in the development of heating device technologies that are more efficient and have low pollutant emissions. The corrosion of materials, including the chimney and the internal parts of the boilers, due to the high content of chlorine and sulphur of some biomass residuals, is still a problem that needs to be solved.
Production and combustion of almond shell briquettes in Crevillent, Spain

Background
As a company working in the field of renewable energy Covaersa produces, and distributes almond shell briquettes. In 2009, the world production of almond reached 2.4 Mio t. About half of the world’s total production, come from the United States (1,162,000 t, 49 %) followed by Spain being the second world producer (282,000 t, 12 % of total production), Spain’s production is located at the Mediterranean seaside communities: Catalonia Valencia, Balearic Islands (Mallorca), Murcia, Andalucia and Aragon. The annual almond production varies according to the changing weather conditions. Almond shells have a high heating value, and can be used for energy purpose and other industrial applications. Almond shells are already used as fuel for bakery furnaces, the ceramic industry and in heating facilities of livestock farming. In order to improve its marketing, the company BRIEC – COVAERSA has decided to use almond shell briquettes. This resulted in a series of difficulties which the company managed to overcome by means of its R&D department.

Raw material
For almond harvest and hulling a so-called “vibrator” is used which is fitted to the tractor truck. It resembles, once expanded, the shape of an inverted umbrella. Before milling the almonds are placed on large open air surfaces to dry "under the sun".

Raw material characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw material</th>
<th>Almond shells</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moisture content wt.-%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heating value, kJ/kg</td>
<td>18,640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ash content wt.-%, dry basis</td>
<td>1.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chlorine wt.-%, dry basis</td>
<td>0.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulphur wt.-%, dry basis</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercury, mg/kg</td>
<td>0.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount, t/year</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once dried, they are sold to the miller where they are shelled and classified. The discarded shells are piled up and sold to farms and industries.

Pelletizing process
The BRIEC factory has a production capacity of 30,000 t/year. The shells are supplied with trucks, sieved to remove stones and then fed to a silo with a capacity of 45 t by a conveyor belt.

Drying tunnel
From the silo, almond shells are transported with a conveyor belt that is equipped to remove contaminants and metallic impurities to the washing facilities. The shells are washed in two tunnels by soaking in a water bath. Afterwards, the shells are dried in a drying tunnel-vibrating drum with a capacity of 10 t/h to reduce the moisture content to approximately 2 %. Consecutively, the almond shells are passed through a distribution silo where they are fed to the compacting/ pressing and briquetting machinery.

Briquetting machinery

Transportation and storage
The briquettes can be packed either in boxes, big bags or shrink wrapped. The packing type depends on the format of the almond shell briquettes.
One of the BRIEC company’s clients is Retirement Home La Purísima which is a private retirement home located in the municipality of Crevillent. It belongs to La Purísima Social Enterprise Organization and provides accommodation for 32 people. Its heating boilers have a total installed capacity of 235 kW (2 x 100 kW heating boilers + 1 x 35 kW boiler for hot water supply).

The boilers are equipped with feeding screws that are able to disintegrate the briquettes and with a 1500 litres buffer tank. The boilers have been installed three months ago. Thus, it is difficult to estimate the yearly consumption. From the replacement of the previous natural gas boilers 50 – 55 % lower costs are expected.

So far, no technical problems during combustion have been observed. Previously, boilers were running only 5 h/d due to cost restrictions and the old people used to be cold. Now, the boilers operate 24 h/d and the old people can spend their twilight years much more comfortable at a much lower price in comparison to gas.

Other uses for briquettes

Almond shell briquettes can also be used as fuel for bakery ovens as well as at the wood-fired ovens of pizzerias. When wood briquettes were replaced by almond shell briquettes in bakery ovens 30 % smaller amount of fuel was required. Domestic heat appliances (e.g. fireplaces, wood boilers) seem to be further interesting options for the utilisation of almond shell briquettes. Due to its low moisture content and high heating value quick heat up can be achieved using very little fuel. Also, the flame image is really clean and attractive. It doesn´t stain the glass of stoves or built-in chimneys.

Producer´s view

Covaersa´s aim is to achieve a leading position by means of its Briec brand, both at the national and international biomass markets using a high quality product endowed with such properties and characteristics which will distinguish it greatly from the rest of biomass fuels.
Production and combustion of Reed Canary grass briquettes in Sweden

**Background**

Due to increasing prices for woodchips and growing competition for raw materials Låttra farm, located about 150 km west of Stockholm, started to look into the possibility to produce reed canary-grass (RCG) briquettes for sale and own use. Låttra Farm grows reed canary grass on 70 hectares and the goal is to increase this to 100 hectares by 2012. RCG is a perennial grass that can be grown throughout Sweden.

**Location of Låttra Farm**

**Growing and briquetting of Canary Reed Grass**

Låttra farm has the capacity to produce 3,500 tonnes of wood briquettes per year. The briquetting presses have a capacity for briquetting of reed canary-grass from about 500 hectares. Today briquettes (wood) are supplied to both households (15 %) and greater heating plants (85 %). The bales of grass are cut up in a slow shredder before being shredded further in an industrial grinder. The material is then fed into three Bogma V40 briquette presses which produce briquettes of 40 mm diameter. The finished briquettes are fed into a horizontal silo with capacity for 1,000 tonnes of briquettes. The briquettes are taken directly from the silo for delivery to customers.

**Reed canary grass bales**

Typical fuel properties of reed canary grass in spring (db...dry basis).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Net calorific value (MJ/kg db)</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ash content (wt.% db)</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moisture (wt.% db)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Softening temperature of ash (°C)</td>
<td>1,420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nitrogen (wt.% db)</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulphur (wt.% db)</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chlorine (wt.% db)</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Customers**

There are currently a number of heating plants within a 100 km radius of Låttra Farm that use woodchips, wood pellets or briquettes. One of these plants is the briquette-fired plant at Ökna School in Tystberga, which is run by TCG Teem Combustion Group, based in Ulricehamn. TCG builds and operates different kinds of district heating plants.

**Transport**

Briquettes are loaded onto trucks at Låttra Farm and transported in demountable containers that connect to the feeding system at Öknas School. Each shipment contains about 30 tonnes of reed canary grass briquettes.
Feeding system at Öknas School

Combustion at Öknas School

The old solid fuel boiler at the Ökna School, which was run on wood briquettes, was exchanged with a new Ökotherm solid fuel boiler (800 kW, C6) suited for ash-rich reed canary grass briquettes during the summer of 2011. In autumn 2011, TCG started to optimise the plant for the of use reed canary grass briquettes from Lättra Farm. Sörmland County buys thermal heat of TCG to Öknaskolan. This concept is a hassle-free heating alternative. TCG takes care of:

- Maintenance
- Operation
- Alarm management
- Service and maintenance

Annually TCG produces approximately 2,500 MWh heat at Öknas School.

Problems/ possible obstacles

The main challenge is to optimize the equipment for handling of ash rich fuels and to find ways to decrease corrosion.

Contact

SP Technical Research Institute of Sweden
Anna Sager
Tel: 010-516 58 37
E-mail: anna.sager@sp.se