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ADBA Market Report

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# Biomethane from Organic Wastes Could Quadruple by 2021

Government investment could prompt a lead to a quadrupling of the number of biomethane plants in the UK, according to a market report from the Anaerobic Digestion and Bioresources Association (ADBA).

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Government investment could prompt a lead to a quadrupling of the number of biomethane plants in the UK, according to a market report from the Anaerobic Digestion and Bioresources Association (ADBA).

The organisation said that such a proliferation of biomethane plants could result from the £1.15 billion allocation for the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) budget by 2021, announced during the Chancellor's Spending Review statement [last week](#).

The data, released in ADBA's latest [Market Report](#) as part of the trade body's National Conference event, highlighted how biomethane deployment is set to build upon record growth since last December, which has witnessed a quadrupling of plant numbers from 10 to 40.

factors could render Circular Economy models irrelevant.

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According to the association, if a reasonable proportion of the RHI budget is allocated to anaerobic digestion, and the scheme structure is workable, then 180 biomethane plants could be in service by 2021 with the combined potential to heat almost 500,000 homes.

“Thanks to additional funding for the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI),” explained ADBA’s Chief Executive, Charlotte Morton. “Projected growth in biomethane alone could heat almost 500,000 homes if the scheme rules are supportive.”

“But it’s not just about energy security and carbon abatement – the additional biomethane deployment could also create around 5,000 extra construction jobs over the next five years,” she continued. “Nothing’s set in stone yet though – ultimately the devil’s in the detail and so we’re seeking clarification from DECC on how available funding will break down on a technology-by-technology basis.

According to Morton, not only will the additional 140 biomethane plants provide a source of indigenous gas, reducing dependence on natural gas imports from volatile parts of the world and create thousands of manufacturing jobs, but will do so by generating value from municipal waste otherwise destined for expensive landfill

She added that it would also support farming resilience through improved food production and resource management.

“The growth under the new RHI settlement should only be the start. Indigenous gas from anaerobic digestion has the potential to meet as much as 30% of the UK’s domestic gas or electricity demand – or for that matter to fuel 80% of heavy goods vehicles,” said Morton.

“While the government’s commitment to RHI is welcome, delivering AD’s overall potential also

needs a viable Feed-in Tariff, which means increasing ambition for the scheme and restoring crucial investor confidence by allowing pre-accreditation to recognise AD's lengthy deployment periods," she added.

Speaking at ADBA's National Conference, the Committee on Climate Change's Chief Executive, Matthew Bell, said: "We need a 1% per year [reduction in carbon emissions] from agriculture to 2030.... that will require a range of measures, not least of which is anaerobic digestion."

Commenting on AD's central role in decarbonising both the farming and waste treatment industries, Morton added:

"AD has the potential to reduce the UK's greenhouse gas emissions alone by 4% – that's about £1.2 billion saved in carbon abatement costs.

"With the RHI budget commitment, AD can now deliver a third of the additional 20TWh renewable heat required by 2020 to meet the government's 12% target.

"Aside from the avoided fossil fuel emissions borne from generating renewable energy, AD also reduces emissions from rotting manure, landfilled food waste and expensive carbon-intensive manufactured fertiliser. Taken together, ADBA calculates that these savings are worth £65 per megawatt hour in carbon abatement – a substantial contribution that establishes AD as a cost-effective technology for delivering green baseload energy for bill payers."

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