



Pressemitteilung

Press release · Communiqué de presse

Vechta, May 2021

Spain: WELTEC BIOPOWER RNG Plant Cuts Carbon Emissions of Dairy Cattle Farm

Long-Term Purchase Agreement Secures Use as Biofuel

Currently, German biogas specialist WELTEC BIOPOWER is building a biomethane plant for the Spanish dairy cattle farm Torre Santamaría. Since the first 250-kW biogas plant went live back in 2011, the Catalan family business has been able to cover its entire energy demand from its own residues. The farm in Vallfogona de Balaguer was the first milk producer in Spain to use any residual materials for the production of energy.

The investment in the new RNG/ biomethane plant amounts to more than €4 million, a quarter of this sum will be spent on modernising the existing infrastructure and biogas plant. One of the reasons why Catalonia's second-largest dairy producer is able to allocate a budget of this magnitude is that the biomethane sales had already been contractually secured at an early stage. The green gas is to be marketed as climate-friendly fuel via an energy service provider. „We view this AD plant as an environmental investment, as it allows us to cut our own greenhouse emissions almost to zero and generate additional income from biomethane“, explains Juan Bautista Pons Torrades, Managing Director and owner of Torre Santamaría.

Besides its pioneer spirit in environmental topics, the cattle farm in the province of Lleida is also a trailblazer in other areas. For example, Torre Santamaría was one of the first to introduce the well digestible A2 milk. Moreover, in 2019, the business was the first dairy cattle farm to be certified by the Lactalis Group in recognition of its animal welfare efforts. The dairy group Lactalis purchases some 22 million liters of milk a year from Torre Santamaría and sells it under various brands.

„To produce this amount of milk, we keep 2,300 dairy cows and 2,100 calves on an operating area of 14.2 hectares“, says Juan Bautista Pons Torrades. Every year, some 60,000 t of input substances accumulate for use in the biogas production. Cattle manure accounts for about 90 percent of the substrates. Bedding consisting of ground straw as well as silage leftovers are also fed into the digester. Currently, WELTEC is setting up two additional stainless-steel digesters for the digestion of all residues on the farm. Each of the digesters has a height of 6.30 m, a diameter of 26.87 m and a capacity of 3,573 m³. „After processing the biogas generated in the digesters, Torre Santamaría feeds 300 standard m³/h of biomethane into the natural gas grid“, reports Mark Kornweibel, the Spanish sales partner of WELTEC BIOPOWER.

According to Kornweibel, the existing 250-kW cogeneration power plant will continue to be operated despite the transition to RNG production. The farm is thus able to cover its own demand for power, heat and hot water. After the new plant is finished in summer 2021, Torre Santamaría will continue to satisfy its demand for energy from its own raw material. Moreover, the plant operation enables the Catalans to shoulder their corporate social responsibility and maintain a healthy balance between environment, social concerns, economic factors as well as security of food and energy supply.

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Organic energy worldwide

Pictures/Captions



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Company Portrait

The **WELTEC** Group from Vechta, Germany, has developed into a globally leading specialist for the construction and operation of biogas and biomethane plants since it was founded back in 2001. The Group designs, plans and sets up energy plants, operates them on a permanent or temporary basis, provides 24/7 service and delivers sustainable usage concepts for output flows, thereby covering the entire biogas value chain.

The establishment of individual, technically mature solutions up to a plant size of 10 MW is one of the strengths of **WELTEC BIOPOWER**. The high proportion of custom-developed components is a key success factor. Moreover, the use of stainless-steel technologies ensures flexible substrate input, quick and inexpensive assembly and a consistently high quality standard, regardless of the location. Following the commissioning, **WELTEC's** mechanical and biological service plays a significant role in ensuring the plant efficiency.

The company also boasts a wealth of experience in the field of biogas generation and utilisation. The company's nine decentralised plants generate 96 million standard m³ of biogas a year. Most of it is processed to biomethane and made available to energy suppliers and petrol station operators via the public gas network. Additionally, at 16 locations in Germany – e.g. in the field of horticulture, housing construction and healthcare as well as communities – the biomethane is used for generating heat within the framework of **WELTEC** energy contracting.

The biogas specialist is well aware of the importance of customer and investor proximity. Accordingly, the Group's sales and service network spans the entire globe. The range of customers includes businesses from industries such as agriculture, food, waste and wastewater. So far, the 120 employees of the **WELTEC** Group have implemented more than 350 energy plants in 25 countries on five continents. These plants save about 485.000 tons of CO_{2eq} a year.

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