

connect

The Biomass Connect
Newsletter

Issue 2
February 2023

IN THIS ISSUE

Welcome	1
New Dept. for Energy Security and Net Zero	1
Focus on Innovation	2
Webinars: What's coming up	2
News in Brief	3
Growers Stories	4
Policy Latest	4
Dates for your Diary	5
Student Opportunity	5
Technical Articles	6
Biomass Connect Demo Events	7



WELCOME

Welcome to the second edition of Connect, the Biomass Connect newsletter. Originally, we were planning to produce the newsletter twice a year, but there's so much going on that we have decided to increase it to a quarterly publication.

In this issue there's information on a new game that can help you understand about growing energy crops, the latest policy news, details of upcoming events and lots of news snippets.

GET IN TOUCH

E: info@biomassconnect.org
W: www.biomassconnect.org

BEIS energy portfolio superseded by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero

In the recent government reshuffle the Department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) was overhauled and a new department created which will have a sole focus on energy, climate change and net zero targets. The minister in charge of this portfolio is the Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP. According to the official press release, the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero "will focus on giving the UK cheaper, cleaner, more secure sources of energy - cutting bills, cutting emissions, and cutting our dependence on international energy supplies, like those of Putin's Russia".

Follow our Social Feeds



FOCUS ON INNOVATION

The Envirocrops project is developing a decision support web app for biomass crops such as miscanthus, willow and eucalyptus. The project will provide a massive boost to knowledge exchange on these crops and assist with the upscale challenge towards net zero. The intention is to use digital tools that have become common place in everyday life over the last couple of decades to bring all the pertinent information about growing and using biomass crops into a single place. Once complete the Envirocrops web app will therefore act like a price comparison website, an encyclopaedia, a business directory and a trading platform. The alpha release of the app will be available to use in late March 2023.



In the meantime, the project team have developed a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) game that will help engage school age children, agricultural and environmental students and anyone interested in planting these crops. Cropper is educational and fun and should turn biomass rookies into miscanthus and willow whizzes in just three plays. This will help influence the next generation of decision makers and farmers.

For more information and to sign up to the project newsletter: envirocrops.com

Project Collaborators



WEBINARS

We've got another couple of very interesting webinars coming up. These will be facilitated by Kevin Lindegaard of Crops for Energy and each webinar will include two key industry players who will present bang up to date information. The webinars can be livestreamed so that you can post your questions in the chat function, or viewed as a video after the event on the Biomass Connect website library.

Webinar 3

Biomass crops - Some interesting alternatives
Online event 23 Feb 2023 at 16:00

Some biomass crops are bigger and leave a greater impression than others whilst others might be humbler but still get the job done. Eucalyptus trees can produce exceptional yields of hardwood timber when the right species is planted in the right place. Reed Canary Grass is at the other end of the spectrum - this is a short term, lower yielding perennial that is cheap to establish and easy to remove making it a perfect energy crop for a tenant farmer.

The expert panellists will be Bryan Elliott of Eucalyptus Renewables and John Hawkins of Bagber Farms.

Register Here

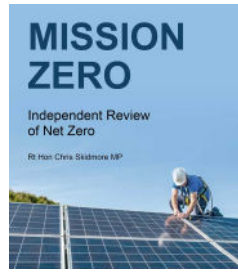
Webinar 4

The Regs - How to play by the rules with biomass crops
Online event 23 Mar 2023 at 16:00

Before you plant perennial crops or use the biomass in a combustion system you need to get your head around the legal nitty gritty. Whether that is environmental screening, sustainability criteria, emissions thresholds or production quality protocols, there is quite a lot of red tape to navigate. Before embarking on a project, it's essential to recognise what's involved and understand the costs and timescales. This webinar will provide you with all the knowledge you need to stay on the right side of the regs.

The expert panellists will be Caroline Ayre of Evolving Forests and Gill Alker of Amp Clean Energy

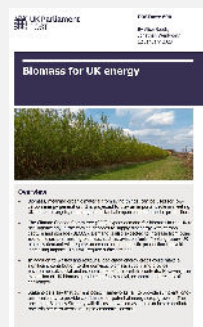
Register Here



Net Zero is the economic opportunity of the 21st Century

'Mission Zero' – the Independent Review of Net Zero was published on Friday 3rd January 2023 by MP Chris Skidmore. The 340-page report makes calls for 25 key actions by 2025 and 129 recommendations all to seize opportunities from creating a green economy. The report calls for more effort to encourage sustainable UK biomass production and the need for Government to publish its Biomass Strategy as soon as possible. Also, the Government should publish a "Land Use Framework, alongside an analysis of incentives for land managers to grow biomass and a plan for how to improve those incentives". Find out more and download the report here:

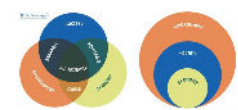
<https://www.biomassconnect.org/news/net-zero-is-the-economic-opportunity-of-the-21st-century-uks-net-zero-review-calls-for-urgent-actions/>



Mini review on the role of biomass for UK Energy production

On the 12th of January 2023 the Parliamentary Office for Science and Technology published a brief review (POST Note) on the status and role of Biomass in UK energy generation. The review notes that the expansion of the UK biomass production sector presents an array of technical and socio-economic challenges which will need to be addressed to enable sustainable growth of the sector, avoid increasing reliance on imported biomass and avoid causing other deleterious effects on the environment. Several of our partner organisations were involved in providing information for the review. Read more here:

<https://www.biomassconnect.org/news/the-uk-parliamentary-office-of-science-and-technology-publish-mini-review-on-the-role-of-biomass-for-uk-energy-generation/>



How bioenergy contributes to a sustainable future

The International Energy Agency (IEA) Bioenergy Review Update 2023 presents an evidence-based assessment of the status of bioenergy around the world. The assessment is based on work conducted by over 200 experts, active within the Tasks of the IEA Bioenergy Technology Collaboration Programme (TCP). This extensive report will appeal to industry participants, academics and students as it is stuffed full of impactful facts and interesting infographics.

Read the full report at:
<https://www.ieabioenergyreview.org/>



GROWERS' STORIES

Steve and Matt Hunt, Bio Global Industries based in Asheridge, Bucks

The video was filmed on 19 February 2023. Watch it here:

<https://youtu.be/CN2LRZF8V1M>

You can come and see Matt and Steve in the Biomass Connect Farm to Fire event (see below).

- The farm has a 98 kW BioKompakt boiler and uses 80 tonnes of wood fuel per year.
- Steve and Matt planted 2.5 hectares of SRC willow in 2013.
- They also planted a number of trials of SRC willow, SRF poplar and SRF Eucalyptus in 2015.
 - SRC willow 30 varieties @ 10,000 per hectare.
 - SRC willow 10 varieties @ 6,000 per hectare.
 - SRC poplar 6 varieties @ 6,000 per hectare.
 - SRF poplar 12 varieties @ 1,667 per hectare.
 - SRF eucalyptus 1 species *E. glaucescens*, 2 provenances @ 1,667 per hectare.
- The fields were previously pasture land with clay soils with flint.
- The crops were planted by hand through membrane to suppress weeds.
- Yields have recently been evaluated for the crops with non-destructive caliper measurements and some destructive yields.
- The 8 year yield figures have been amalgamated and are very interesting suggesting very much a horses for courses type results. Preliminary results suggest that the SRF poplar planted at 1,667 plants per hectare had the highest yield.

POLICY LATEST

Perennial biomass crops are included in the Environmental Land Management (ELM) Scheme

On 26 January 2023 DEFRA published an update on how government will pay for land-based environmental and climate goods and services under its Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes. The update (which currently only applies to England) specified that perennial biomass crops such as miscanthus, reed canary grass and tree species grown as short-rotation coppice are all included under the 'permanent crops' category within the ELM schemes.

Under the guidance: "Permanent crops are crops that occupy the land for 5 years or more (other than permanent grassland) and nursery crops and provide repeated harvests."

The update notes, that in addition to their role for provision of bioenergy, permanent biomass crops also have the potential to provide other important environmental benefits such as:

- Providing important habitats and food sources for wildlife.
- Help manage soil health and water quality.

The update provides information regarding available maintenance payments and lists a number of actions and standards eligible for subsidy. However, at present, the guidance does not specifically outline how the cultivation of biomass crops can specifically contribute to these subsidised actions. It is hoped greater clarity will be provided once the UK Biomass Strategy is published later this year.

[You can read the full policy paper here.](#)

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



EnviroCrops Farm Walks

The EnviroCrops project is hosting two farm walks in December:

7th Mar 2023 1100-1400 at North Curry, Somerset led by Bryan Elliot of Eucalyptus Renewables

8th Mar 2023 1100-1400 at Poplar Tree Company, Herefordshire, led by Will Jackson

To sign up for either of these farm walks please state your name and contact number with the farm walk you are interested in in the header of the email to info@nfuenergy.co.uk and sign up by no later than Tuesday 1st March.

MISCANTHUS FARM WALK



Miscanthus Farm Walk

2nd March 2023
9:30-11:30am

Terravesta are organising a farm walk with Tom Jeffries in Northamptonshire.

The morning will include tea, coffee, and biscuits, short presentations from Terravesta, a chance to meet the grower, and see the Miscanthus crop.

Details of these events and more can be found on the

**Biomass Connect
Event Calendar**



Argus Biomass Conference

Argus brings back one of the largest global biomass events with the 13th annual Argus Biomass Conference 2023, taking place on **18-20 April** at the prestigious Queen Elizabeth II Centre in the heart of London.

Hear about new innovations in the pellet market, new industrial applications of biomass, new procurement opportunities, and meet with key companies and senior executives for intensive networking across three days.

If you have an event that should be on the calendar then please let us know.

STUDENT OPPORTUNITY

Are you interested in the Net Zero challenge and the role that biomass crops have in meeting these targets?

If so, Envirocrops, a partner of Biomass Connect are looking for an a dynamic agricultural student to

- sit in on the Envirocrops Advisory group,
- test our spreadsheet calculators, the app and our Cropper game
- share information on the app and game

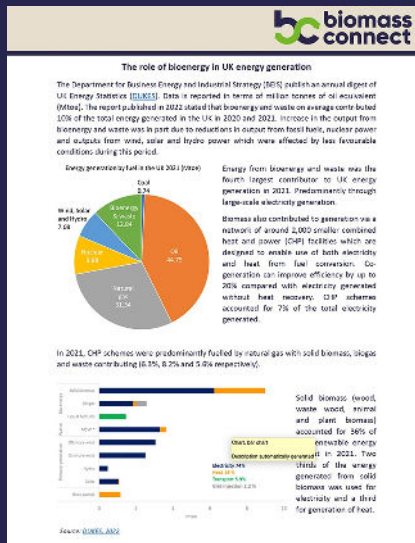
**Find out
More**



TECHNICAL ARTICLES

A quick round-up of the latest technical articles published on the **Biomass Connect** website.

Data Summary - Solid Biomass consumption trends in the UK energy sector 2016-2021



The utilisation of solid biomass as a fuel in generation of heat and power has seen a significant increase over the last ten years as many coal-fired power stations were converted to using biomass. This article provides a summary of the data reported by BEIS and OFGEM specific to solid biomass use in the UK heat and power sector over the last 5-10 year period.

[Read Article](#)

FACTSHEET: Effect of planting biomass crops on soil carbon



Factsheet exploring the effect of planting biomass crops on Soil Carbon.

[View Factsheet](#)

There is also a more in depth Technical Article focussing on the effects of planting biomass crops on soil carbon.

[Read Article](#)

[Read More Technical Articles](#)

BIOMASS CONNECT DEMO EVENTS



Biomass Harvesting and Willow Varieties

Date: 7th March 2023
Location: IBERS, Gogerddan, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion.

Come and join us for an afternoon learning about biomass crop harvesting and willow variety options at IBERS, Aberystwyth University. The event will focus on harvesting approaches for willow and miscanthus crops, and an overview of the research undertaken between IBERS and Rothamsted Research into varieties of willow for biomass production. Our expert panel of speakers includes Will Macalpine (Rothamsted Research) and Kevin Lindegaard (Crops for Energy) who between them have almost 30 years of willow breeding experience.

Book a Place



From Field to Fire - Biomass Harvesting and Utilisation

Date: 22nd March 2023
Location : Bio Global Industries, Asheridge, Bucks.

Come and join us for an afternoon learning about biomass crop harvesting and harvested material utilisation at Biomass Connect partner BGI Ltd. BGI have mature crops of short rotation coppice willow, and short rotation forestry poplar and eucalyptus.

The demonstration will include a variety of harvesting and processing methods showing how to convert newly harvested timber into wood chips and briquettes.

Book a Place

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