BIOMASS

Fuelling the path to Net Zero

Biomass crops are making a major contribution to the sustainable future of energy supply

In the quest to achieve the UK's ambitious Net Zero target, the biomass industry in the UK will need to undergo significant development in order to contribute to a sustainable energy supply for the future. The Climate Change Committee's recommendation to plant 700,000 hectares of perennial biomass crops by 2050, including crops such as willow, poplar and miscanthus, will represent a significant change in UK land use, but one that is necessary as part of a suite of measures for national decarbonisation.

This groundbreaking initiative unites nine partner organisations across the UK, forming a collaborative force which is aimed at providing robust and independent information

The DESNZ Biomass Strategy emphasises the pivotal role of biomass crops in decarbonising various sectors of the economy. However, the successful realisation of this goal depends on the UK's ability to develop the biomass feedstock supply chain to a sufficient level in order to meet Net Zero targets.

To address this challenge, DESNZ has invested in the Biomass Feedstock Innovation (BFI) programme, with Biomass Connect at the forefront.

Biomass Connect unites nine partner organisations across the UK, forming a collaborative force with the aim of providing robust and independent information to support growers that plan to adopt these novel crops, and supporting the industry sector as it develops. This wealth of knowledge extends not only to potential biomass growers but also plays a crucial role in land-based and bioenergy policy development.

Biomass Connect: Bridging innovation and knowledge sharing

Biomass Connect is a multi-site demonstration and engagement programme, for the benefit of UK growers. It aims to support and develop the necessary interactions between growers and industry, and to provide the necessary impartial information needed to build this industry in the UK. All resources produced by Biomass Connect are free and can be accessed through the project's website: www.biomassconnect.org.

There, growers can access informational resources including technical material, industry news, and details on upcoming events and webinars.

Hub sites: Where innovation takes root

Biomass Connect has eight hub sites, strategically located across the UK. These sites serve as living laboratories where over a quarter of a million plants have been planted, across 11 different biomass crop types. The aim is to offer potential growers valuable insights on biomass production, tailored to their specific conditions, regardless of geographic location. These sites are essential for demonstrating the potential of biomass crops to the agricultural community.

During the first year of Biomass Connect, demonstration events at hub sites have introduced local communities to the agronomy uses and environmental benefits of these crops. Experts in biomass were on hand to hold discussions with those interested in learning more about these sustainable crops.

Biomass Feedstock Innovation: Pioneering sustainable practices

The BFI's innovation projects, led by academic institutions and commercial companies, are exploring methods to gear up production, mechanise planting and harvesting, and develop desirable and resilient production systems.

Notable projects include Envirocrops (envirocrops.com), which is developing an app-based platform to provide growers with agronomic and financial information, helping them choose the most suitable biomass crops for their unique land and climate.

To stay at the forefront of sustainable biomass advancements, Biomass Connect invites all interested parties to join upcoming events and webinars. The Low Carbon Agriculture Show on 6-7 March is an opportunity to speak with industry experts.

For further details, scan the QR code above or visit biomassconnect.org

The nine partner organisations in Biomass Connect:

BGI Ltd
SRUC
UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology
ROTHAMSTED RESEARCH
Crops for Energy
PRIFYSGOL ABERYSTWYTH UNIVERSITY
afbi AGRI-FOOD & BIOSCIENCES INSTITUTE
NIAB
Newcastle University