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### **Programs for Anaerobic Digester Owner/Operators**

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#### Abstract:

Recent publicity and monetary support for on farm biogas production in Pennsylvania has raised interest in digester construction and operation. In the last five years the number of farm based digesters operating or in active design/construction has increased from 4 to 20. Some owner/operators expressed a desire to interact with each other in an informal but private setting. In July 2008 personnel from 8 on-farm digesters met for several hours of informal discussion and a tour of a 2 year old digester. To allow free, open and candid discussion only owner/operators of agricultural anaerobic digesters in Pennsylvania were invited and no vendors, designers or press were present. Based on this meeting the group decided to continue to meet on a quarterly basis. While only 8 digesters were represented, a total of 17 out of 20 responded favorably to the idea and asked to be included in future meetings.

#### Issues Raised and Discussed

- Relations with utilities, interconnection requirements, buy back arrangements, timeliness
- Digester management: Feeding and mixing schedules; Crusting/foam; Settling
- Feedstocks: Biosecurity; Gas production; Nutrients; Regulation and permitting for off farm materials
- NOx and CHP systems permitting?
- Alternative gas uses
- Designs and designers: Material selection; Contracts; Familiarity with our climatic conditions; Operator training; Trouble shooting

A second meeting and tour at another digester is scheduled for November.

#### Impact Statement:

Relationships have been established among 8 digester owner/operators and a mechanism for continuing these relationships and adding other owner/operators has been put in place.

Seventeen of 20 digester owner/operators have expressed interest and desire in improving their operating and management skills by meeting 4 times per year at one of their digesters.

Issue areas important to this sector have been identified and plans put in place for cooperatively addressing these issues.

Category: Agricultural BMPs  
Type of Presentation: Oral Presentation