

Puffin Power!! Wood Pellets to Tackle Climate Change

A plan to supply the north-east with 25,000 tonnes of environmentally friendly wood pellets, enough for 5000 homes to switch from fossil fuels to a carbon neutral fuel, was unveiled today.

Puffin Pellets, which is launching at the All-Energy Conference '07, aims to be the first major producer of wood pellets in this area by being fully operational at its Howegarden site near Turriff by the end of the year.

The chosen site in the heart of Aberdeenshire is perfect for a pellet plant because of the large availability of raw material from the forest products industry in this area. There is also a lack of alternative outlets for sawmill co-products in North-east Scotland, and being remote from central belt infrastructure is ideal for a localised energy production unit.

Wood Pellets are a modern, clean and super efficient form of biomass, produced from highly compressed sawdust without any other additives. A wide range of attractive and up-to-the-minute appliances are now available to burn pellets, from single room stoves to large district heating systems, with fully automated boilers being the norm.

Biomass has the lowest capital cost of all alternative energy sources, the technology is well understood and the efficiency levels of the boilers can match the best of those for oil or gas. It is little wonder therefore that a sustainable industry mainly based on wood products has been created in Sweden and Austria, where they have a considerable tax on fossil fuel for heating. (The UK currently has no tax and a reduced rate of VAT – 5%. There are moves afoot in the EU to bring in a common tax across all member states.)

Puffin Pellets is the joint venture of local businessmen Bryan Harper and Thomas Tait OBE. Tait, who was managing director of Inverurie's paper mill for over 30 years, was inspired after visiting the World Bioenergy Exhibition in Jonkopping, Sweden, last May.

He says, *'It showed what could be done now that energy prices are so high world wide, and at the same time helping the environment at an economic price. Indeed, I believe it will not be long before pellets are the lower cost alternative.'*

Bryan, of *Harpers* in Inch, is already heavily involved in producing biofuels, mainly in the form of dried woodchips, and is going to be supplying the raw materials for producing the pellets.

'Using wood instead of fossil fuels means that sustainably managed woodland can be a significant resource for a low-carbon economy.'

Producing fuel from timber taken from well-managed woodlands will also greatly improve conditions for wild plants and animals.

Stimulating the wood fuel market is good for jobs too, and Puffin Pellets will create up to 12 jobs directly and approximately 6 indirectly'

Biomass such as wood fuel currently supplies 3% of total UK energy.

Wood fuel is internationally regarded as being carbon neutral.

The combustion (direct or indirect) of biomass as a fuel returns CO² to the atmosphere. However this carbon is part of the current carbon cycle: as trees grow, they absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. During photosynthesis the trees store carbon in their woody tissue and oxygen is released back to the atmosphere. When wood is burned, the carbon stored in the woody tissue combines with oxygen to produce carbon dioxide; this is emitted back to the atmosphere in the exhaust gases.

This all happens over a relatively short period of time, and trees that are used for wood fuel can constantly be replaced by planting for new growth. Therefore a reasonably stable level of atmospheric carbon results from its use as a fuel.

Puffin Pellets will be on Aberdeenshire councils stand at the All-Energy Conference on the 23rd and 24th May at the AECC.

www.puffinpellets.com