



AMERICAN BIOGAS COUNCIL

Leading Women break ground on Connecticut's first renewable electricity dairy digester

As a young, female farm owner of Fort Hill Farms, Kies Orr is used to breaking new ground. In that way, she and Rashi Akki, CEO of Ag-Grid Energy, have more than a little in common. As a result, to many, it's no surprise that these two leading women and the teams they've built have broken new ground this month in Connecticut. Construction has now commenced at Fort Hill farms to build a biogas system that will recycle food waste and manure, into renewable energy and soil products. And in doing so, Connecticut will soon have its first dairy digester that produces renewable energy.



It was four years ago that Ag-Grid Energy and Fort Hill Farms began work to develop a dairy and food waste anaerobic digester. This was certainly a vision that the late Peter Orr had for sustainability on his farm. Peter passed away 2 years ago, handing the reins over to his brother Jim and his daughter Kies, both of whom ensured that his vision was supported. Jim Orr, Fort Hill Farms' estate executor said, "we are delighted to get started on this important project that both honors the memory of Peter Orr and will make Fort Hill Farms a more sustainable business."

The digester under constructed by Martin Construction Resource will produce biogas using manure from the farm plus food waste from the surrounding area. The system is expected to produce electricity using a 550 KW engine, supplying the cities of New Britain and Middletown with non-stop, 24/7 renewable electricity to be used in their municipal buildings.

Live Oak Bank and the CT Green Bank have been proud finance partners in the project. "Innovative projects such as these are important for rural America, job creation, energy infrastructure, and

environmental stewardship. We are most excited to help support these small businesses with such a unique and cutting-edge technology” says Max Vernier of Live Oak Bank

Additionally, the New England utility Eversource has partnered in supporting this project by providing virtual net metering and interconnection to the grid.



The project also represents other firsts. Thanks to CT DEEP and Tech Environmental, the first ever air permit for a biogas facility and a first ever Nutrient Management Plan for the co-digestion of food waste and manure have both now been approved. “This was a great partnership effort with the DEEP team from the pre-application due diligence on through technical evaluation of our project and final permitting. When you bring a quality design together with a transparent and supportive regulatory process, the project development outcomes can be mutually beneficial” says Tim Jones of Tech Environmental.

“We are excited to expand from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to the State of Connecticut and pave the way for future farm digesters in the region that support each state’s renewable energy and food diversion goals “says Rashi Akki – CEO of Ag-Grid Energy.”