

Factsheet 9

The Rural Network for Northern Ireland

October 2011



Renewable Energy

Sharing & Exchanging Information

Sharing and exchanging information is key to the work of the Rural Network for Northern Ireland. We will share and exchange information in a number of ways.

These include:-

- A dedicated website www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk
- Newsletters, publications and fact sheets
- Events, meetings and visits

This Factsheet provides information on:

Renewable Energy

Please Note: The information contained within this Factsheet is for information only.

INTRODUCTION

The energy sources we use daily, coal, gas, peat and oil, are known as fossil fuels as they have been formed from the organic remains of prehistoric plants and animals. The issue of energy resources from fossil fuels and their impact on the planet has been at the forefront of environmental thinking and lobbying for many years. Over the past decade the issue has become even more topical and relevant to all our daily lives as these energy sources are in decline. It is estimated that 90% of the world's electricity is generated from the use of fossil fuels and our dependence on these fuels to provide heat, electricity and transport has now become a major and pressing concern for global governments.

WHATS THE ISSUE WITH ENERGY?

While fossil fuels have advantages in that they are relatively cheap to transport and purchase they also have several major disadvantages:

Cost: Fuel is subject to political and economic fluctuations. In simple terms

oil costs rise when exports from a certain region are reduced or it is feared they will reduce e.g due to war or natural disasters.

Climate Change: It is believed that fossil fuels contribute to climate change because as they are burned they release harmful pollutants into the atmosphere.

Pollution: Extraction of oil, gas and coal damages the environment resulting in air pollution, water pollution and damage to land surface.

Availability: Many experts believe that based on the current global demand there is less than 50 years of oil production left .

Non-renewable sources are finite therefore other means of energy production must be utilised.

WHATS THE ALTERNATIVE?

Renewable energy Technologies produce sustainable, clean energy from sources such as the sun, the wind, plants, and water and are now seen as the most cost effective and sustainable method of providing heat, light and transport energy solutions.

LEGISLATION?

In recent years global governments have provided legislation and incentives for Renewable Energy implementation schemes.

The EU Renewable Energy Directive was published in 2009. The directive requires member states to produce a share of energy consumption from renewable energy sources with the aim of producing at least 20% of energy from renewable by 2020.

The UK Renewable Energy Strategy (RES) was launched in 2009 and aims to increase the amount of energy from renewable sources from 1% of its total energy use (in 2005) to 15% by 2020.

In Northern Ireland DARD fully supports the development of renewable energy initiatives within the agricultural and forestry sectors and in the wider rural community.

In 2010 DARD issued a **Renewable Energy Action Plan** which set out its detailed vision for renewable energy in the Land Based Sector.

RDP SUPPORT?

Practical action can now be taken as the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 is now accepting renewable energy projects for funding.

Applications for technologies generating electricity and those generating space heat and/or hot water are encouraged from the traditional agricultural community, private individuals and social enterprises.

USEFUL CONTACTS?

Power NI
www.powerni.co.uk

NIE
www.nie.co.uk

Action Renewables
www.actionrenewables.org

Energy Saving Trust
www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

SNAPSHOT OF RDP FUNDING

Farmers and rural businesses can avail of up to £50,000 at a grant rate of 50%

Social Economy Enterprises can apply for up to £170,000 at a grant rate of 75%.

Key Facts:

- *Farm diversification and other rural businesses can use some of the energy produced to offset running costs and/or sold to a third party.*
- *Farmers must sell all energy output to a third party*
- *All applications require planning permission & a feasibility study to be conducted.*

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The Rural Network for Northern Ireland is managed by the Northern Ireland Rural Development Council (RDC) through the Agri Rural Form as part of the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme co-financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development on behalf of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD).

References and links to any external websites or publications shall not be taken as an endorsement by the Rural Network for Northern Ireland of the opinions expressed or services provided by those sites and publications.