

Supporting Biomass Heat in Ontario

Bio-Heat Community of Practice Workshop

Workshop Summary

Tuesday and Wednesday, March 8th and 9th, 2016

Prince Arthur Hotel and Suites, Thunder Bay, ON

Workshop Purpose:

The overall goal of this annual workshop is to develop a Bio-Heat Community of Practice; people who share a common interest and who work together to expand their individual and collective capacity to support the development of a domestic biomass heat market over time.

This workshop provided an opportunity to share research and program initiatives, explore synergies, develop new relationships and partnerships, and support bio-heat projects in Ontario.

The workshop format, consisting of a mixture of presentations, group breakout sessions and networking breaks, allowed participants to share and discuss work they are pursuing related to biomass heat in Ontario. The morning session was devoted to fuel standards and supply chain management, while the afternoon session focused on jurisdictional reviews. There were also two case studies highlighting different aspects of utilizing bioenergy.

PowerPoint Presentations:

All workshop presentations are available on Confederation College's website at www.confederationc.on.ca/appliedresearch

Group Breakout Session:

The purpose of the group breakout session was to discuss the importance of fuel quality as it relates to the newly adopted ISO Solid biofuels standards under CAN/CSA-ISO 17225 Solid biofuels, as well as uses and challenges of the new standards.

Below is the entire set of brainstorming points from the group discussion. Participants came up with lots of great ideas and recommendations!

We asked:

Given the importance of fuel quality in the combustion process:

1) What do you think about the new fuel standards?

- good for buyers
- important for marketing and negotiating
- easy on pellets but difficult on chips
- like that it is a cohesive standard
- great to speak the same consistent language throughout the supply chain and to integrate them to the environmental compliance approval
- will be good to have a Canada-wide standard and not have to rely on EU standards
- previously not equipped to remove contaminants, which was a challenge, but not now able to produce efficient fuel across Canada
- excellent standardization of products and language
- questions about operational implications
- how different are the interpretations? (feel it would be beneficial to have little/no room for interpretations to have less issues)

2) Would you use them voluntarily?

- yes, to increase markets
- yes, for a while if it works
- yes, but price of document is a barrier (maybe a factsheet to solve this)
- yes, as a regulator would quote them as it's easier to make regulations by using industry developed and approved standards and minimize the negative feedback from users and media
- yes, great tool to put in a contract
- should be mandatory

- may limit varying interpretations and language
- may not be cost effective to have small businesses test and monitor
- importance of research projects
- could be phased in to existing operations

3) Do you think they would be helpful to you?

- helpful for regulating products
- allow for targeted forest management/inventory of tree species that meet certain specifications on certain soil types
- yes, because you need one place to look for the information
- useful to talk the same language with the salespeople and contractors; there are some bad biomass equipment (companies) out there selling the “Holy Grail” solution
- between buyer and seller
- this is too much work for residential consumer who cuts their own wood for home biomass system – would be better off just cutting their own wood than implementing these standards
- 100% ! government is all about standards
- “common basis for discussion” – filters down from policy to operation
- From research perspective – *always* helpful to have a standard to ensure consistency between projects/studies
- helpful to homeowner/resident to have an understanding of a complex topic (e.g. have it simplified)

4) What are some challenges you see in adopting these standards?

- all the required charges to set up a certified facility
- increased cost and the cost of ISO documents and 3rd party certification
- training people and capacity building, especially in communities


- auditing
- education and extension to spread adoption by regulators and contractors
- control of the product is a big challenge – people aren't aware of it or asking for it
- the slow release of the new standard (ISO) means people may have already adopted some other foreign standard and switching to the new ISO could be a challenge
- if the ISO paper isn't simple or has too much excess information then people won't use it
- charging for the standard isn't the best way to get people to voluntarily agree to use it
- capacity
- cost
- transfer/simplification/communication of knowledge
- perceived or actual increase in cost
- convincing industries/people to adopt standards

5) What can be done to increase the awareness of these standards?

- awareness – info sessions, tech summaries and fact sheets (like from NRCan)
- legislative standards; market demand for one certification
- a proper KTT Plan (knowledge and technology transfer) developed and delivered by education consultants or NGO's because CSA and NRCan have limited communications resources
- educate
- create a simplified standards document geared towards common language
- simplify the certification process
- make the document easily accessible and easy to find (e.g. on the CSA website)
- raise awareness of importance of standards – through workshops, bulletins, a business case (from a business perspective)
- standardization of language

Brainstorming:

Throughout the day, participants had the opportunity to individually contribute to the following questions...

1. What milestones need to be achieved to advance the use of bio-heat in Ontario?
 - Recognition from the insurance industry that pellet heat is NOT the same as wood stove installations
 - Absolutely ensure supply meets demand – anticipate seasonal demand based on longer term forecasts
 - Forest tenure & wood allocation – regulation, policy needed to support allocation for biomass  business cases supported by MNRF
2. What can members do to advocate bio-heat outside of the BHCP?
 - Many more scientific studies are needed to back up the beneficial claims regarding the shift to Bio-Heat programs
 - Please try to give academic sections a chance to join the “fun”
 - Develop and expand partnerships
 - Further info sessions
3. Are you aware of bio-heat projects (at any stage) taking place in Ontario? If so, can you give a short description and contact name?
 - 3 schools using Viessman boiler (near North School Board, North Bay)
4. Capacity has been identified as a barrier to the use of bioenergy. How would we overcome this barrier?
 - Training and resources
 - Info exchange – workshops

5. What activities should be carried out in a “supporting biomass heat” outreach program?

Who are the target audiences?

- Educate decision makers on the environmental and economic benefits of biomass heat – e.g. rural development, reduces GHG, etc.
- Educate those residents without access to natural gas why they need to consider biomass as a heating solution! (*this option had a lot of additional support as well*)
- Show actual comparative heating costs vs. polluting fossil fuels
- Capacity building and resources to support communities/First Nations
- Info exchange sessions involving forest tenure reps who oversee access to resources (i.e. MNRF)

6. Other thoughts to share....

- Government to introduce incentives in next budget that are specific (not broad and open ended) to helping residents switch from costly fossil fuel heating/power sources. (Look at Maine, Newfoundland, Eastern US, CCPA in Quebec)
- Government financial incentives for biomass appliances and certified installation

Participants:

The following groups participated in the event:

- Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada
- Anishinaabeg of Kabapikotawangag Resource Council (AKRC) Inc.
- Alberta Agriculture and Forestry (via WebEx)
- Aroland First Nation
- Canadian Forest Service – NRCan
- Canadian Wood Fibre Centre – NRCan
- CanmetENERGY – NRCan

- Confederation College – OPG BioEnergy Learning and Research Centre
- Biomass Solution Biomasse
- Biothermic
- Eabametoong First Nation
- FedNor
- FPIInnovations
- ICS Lacroix (Lumber) Inc.
- Lakehead University
- Marten Falls First Nation
- Matawa First Nations Management
- National Research Council Canada
- Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA)
- Ontario Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure & Ministry of Research and Innovation
- Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (MOECC)
- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF)
- Ontario Ministry of Northern Development and Mines
- Ontario Power Generation
- Pineland Forest Nursery
- Quebec Wood Export Bureau (QWEB)
- UBC Biomass and Bioenergy Research Group (UBC/BBRG)
- Viessmann Manufacturing Company Inc. / Viessmann Canada
- Wawasum Group LP.
- Wiltshire and Associates Forestry Inc.
- Wood Pellet Association of Canada (WPAC)

Contact Information:

For more information please contact:

Loni Pierce
A/Program Specialist – Forest Bioeconomy
Forest Industry Division
Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
70 Foster Drive
Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6A 6V5

p: (705) 945-5843
e: Loni.Pierce@ontario.ca

Karen Jackson
A/Policy Analyst – Forest Economy
Forest Industry Division
Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
70 Foster Drive
Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6A 6V5

p: (705) 945-6754
e: Karen.Jackson@ontario.ca