



Cavendish Farms unveils new Bio-Gas Facility

New Annan, PEI – Cavendish Farms, one of North America’s leading producers of frozen potato products, today unveiled a critical vital new element in their environmental action plan, and a first for the potato industry in North America.

“Today we are proud to unveil our Bio-Gas Facility as an example of our corporate approach to researching, investing and implementing innovative new ways that we can create sustainable and environmentally friendly processing methodologies,” Robert Irving, President of Cavendish Farms said at the official opening of the new plant. “This is the first facility in the potato industry to take solid potato waste and convert it into usable energy.”

What sets the plant apart is that while most facilities treat waste water produced from processing, the Cavendish Bio-Gas Facility also takes the solid waste material from potato processing and, through anaerobic digestion (a natural process similar to composting), converts it into energy for the Cavendish processing plants.

“The investment in this new technology benefits our environment while being financially beneficial to our business model,” Irving said. “It is a true win-win for Prince Edward Island.”

Premier Robert Ghiz congratulated Cavendish Farms on their initiative. "I am extremely pleased that Cavendish Farms is setting this important example for processors all across North America, and there is no better place to showcase this initiative than on Prince Edward Island," said Premier Ghiz. "Our government is working hard to encourage innovation of this nature, which will benefit not only our agricultural sector, but all Islanders in terms of the reduced environmental impact. We are pleased to have assisted Cavendish Farms in making this significant investment which will benefit Prince Edward Island for years to come."

"By taking a waste product and turning it into both energy and usable compost, Cavendish Farms is demonstrating a commitment to innovation, to energy efficiency and waste reduction," said Richard Brown, Minister of Environment, Energy and Forestry. "We're encouraged to see Cavendish Farms exploring the possibilities of biofuels as an energy source. This kind of investment helps both the company and the environment of Prince Edward Island."

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Allan Campbell, Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning, also spoke highly of the announcement. "Cavendish Farms is showing a strong commitment to its employees and the entire Prince Edward Island business community by investing in this new technology," said Minister Campbell. "The new biogas facility will allow the company to reduce its carbon footprint and control energy costs. This initiative reaffirms Cavendish Farms' reputation as one of Prince Edward Island's top corporate citizens."

This marks the single biggest reduction in greenhouse gases on the Island. Among the many environmental benefits the new plant will help achieve are: 30-35% reduction in the overall carbon footprint of the potato processing plants; a reduced dependence on fossil fuel used to power the boilers in the processing plants (about 10 million liters per year); fewer trucks required to bring fuel to the plant; the elimination of the need for trucks to remove potato waste from the plant, (reducing the trucking requirements of the processing plants operation by 1450 KM per day) ; and the creation of an organic, natural fertilizer that can be used on fields in place of potato waste.

"This technology helps Cavendish Farms continue with our focus of a sustainable processing mindset, Irving said. "It creates less dependence on fossil fuels through an efficient, controlled cycle by capturing potato processing by-product and converting it into energy, all on one site."

The reduction of green house gas emissions alone is expected to be 35 kilo tones (KT), which represents a reduction of 30-35% for the Cavendish Farms operation. This is equivalent to taking 7,300 cars off the road for one year. "By any measure the reduction in emissions is significant and one that all Cavendish employees can be proud of", Irving said.

The original idea for this facility was explored in 2004, with development beginning in earnest in 2006. The project was led by the Irving Engineering Team with support by Stantec Engineering from Fredericton and the German firm of Krieg & Fischer Engineering GmbH, an engineering company specializing in Bio-Gas plant design around the world. During construction, the plant generated approximately 81,500 person hours of work and utilized the goods and services of 23 Island companies.

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