

Sustainable Practices 2005

Innovations, Technologies, and Products

Coming Soon to a World Near You

March 11, 2005

Minnesota Dairy Celebrates World's First Fuel Cell Electricity from Cow Manure. The Haubenschild farm in rural Princeton, MN recently celebrated the world's first use of methane from cow manure to produce electricity via a fuel cell. Electricity has never before been made in a fuel cell from methane produced from "predigested, pre-collected biomass," according to University of Minnesota principal investigator Phil Goodrich. Farmer Dennis Haubenschild had installed an anaerobic digester several years ago and now has connected the output from the digester to the fuel cell. It produced electricity for the first time at about 3 p.m. on January 27th. Haubenschild reports that the cost of producing electricity from his fuel cell is 5.1 cents per kilowatt hour. The system features a fuel cell manufactured by Plug Power that makes 120 kW per hour from the digester methane. (Princeton Union-Eagle, February 14, 2005, <http://hometownsource.com/2005/February/14farmers.html>)

Santa Cruz Hospital Cafeteria Switches to Organic and Vegetarian Food. The Dominican Hospital in Santa Cruz, CA is enjoying a revamped cafeteria menu thanks to chef Deane Bussiere. Bussiere has decided that there is no reason that nurses, doctors, and patients can't eat organic, sustainably grown, in-season food that rivals restaurant offerings. He started buying produce from a non-profit, community-based organic farm program called Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association. This program trains farm workers to be organic farmers by giving them their own plot of land and teaching them to practice sustainable farming methods. Bussiere buys organic produce directly from those farmers in training. His kitchen also offers organic produce grown by local high school students on a plot of land on the hospital grounds. Of the 70 menu items offered, 40 are vegetarian and 20 are vegan. (Santa Cruz Sentinel, February 16, 2005 <http://www.santacruzsentinel.com/archive/2005/February/16/style/stories/01style.htm>)

SunEdison Links Solar Customers With Third-Party Investors. SunEdison is a young Maryland company beginning to make inroads in the vexing world of financing high first-cost solar energy systems. SunEdison links host customers who want solar power with third party investors who are looking for a tax-advantaged investment. SunEdison simply requires the customer to make a long-term commitment to buy solar energy at prices competitive with their current electricity. By taking available tax credits and by passing along bulk purchase discounts, SunEdison provides solar electricity at a more attractive rate than its customers could achieve through self-ownership. To ensure worry-free operation and profitability, SunEdison has the incentive to make sure the system is installed safely, maintained properly, and uses the highest grade components. SunEdison's customers have found that this makes good business sense in states with subsidies for solar power, including California, Connecticut, New Jersey, Hawaii, Illinois, Massachusetts, Nevada, New York, Rhode Island and Oregon. SunEdison recently won the Harvard Business School's 8th Annual Business Plan Contest. (SunEdison, 2005, <http://sunedison.com/services.html>)

Sustainable Practices 2005 is a weekly information service compiled from publicly available sources and provided by EPA Region 8's Sustainable Practices and State Partnerships Program. For more information, contact David Schaller, 303-312-6146, schaller.david@epa.gov