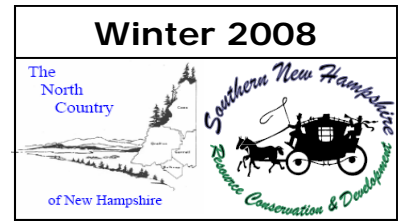


NEW HAMPSHIRE RC&D CATALYST



Resource Conservation and Development
“Bringing Ideas, People and Resources Together to Help Make Things Happen”

RC&D Provides Business Solutions for Farmers

Rural areas of New Hampshire have witnessed an increase in the number of people trying to develop small scale, value-added agricultural ventures. The goals and objectives of small, beginner and transitioning farmers are quite diverse, but they are bound together with the desire to increase the quality of life for their family by growing a successful business venture.

Providers of agricultural technical and financial services in N.H. have seen an increase of over 50% in the past year in the number of requests for business development assistance from small, beginning and transitioning farmers. Surveys conducted within the Small and Beginner Farmers of NH network place a very high priority on needing technical assistance to help

them develop a business plan.

The New Hampshire Agricultural Initiative Program (NHAIP) was created by the North Country and Southern N.H. RC&D Councils to provide business plan development assistance for small, beginning and transitioning farms throughout N.H. Farms selected to participate in the NHAIP were matched with a Business Assistance Team (BAT) which provided the technical assistance necessary for the participant to write his or her business plan.

So far 16 farms have completed their Business Plans. The cost to provide this service and value of donated time is estimated at \$5,000 per farm. The funds to support the NHAIP come from a grant of \$155,440, received from the USDA Rural Development Rural Business

Enterprise Grant Program. The success of the NHAIP has helped to catalyze the formation of a N.H. Legislative Commission that is considering State of N.H. legislation to help farms create business plans and protecting the conversion of farmland.



Betsey Keefe of Swain Farm in Sanbornton, NH inside her family's new loafing hoop barn to improve cow comfort in their dairy.

Bringing the Wool Industry Back to New England

Machinery costs and waste water treatment regulations are two of the biggest obstacles facing present-day



fiber scouring operations. The closing of regional scouring facilities in the 1990s has forced many Northeast farmers to ship their wool as far away as Texas and Canada to be washed.

The technology for safely treating the waste water exists, but is not economical on the small New England scale. The costs can be off-set by separating the solid, liquid and wax

components and utilizing them in innovative ways including composting and biofuels.

Developing a sustainable way to deal with the effluent is a priority of the Northern Heritage Mills, whose mission is to promote and conserve New England's rich textile legacy. **Continued on page 2**

The New Hampshire Wood Biomass Heating Project

Paying \$40/ton for wood chips is the same as paying \$0.72/ gallon for heating oil; \$0.51/ gallon of propane; \$5.50/1000 cu. ft. for natural gas

The North Country RC&D Area Council has been the recipient of a grant from the US Forest Service, State Foresters Wood Energy Jump Start Program.

The program targets schools, municipalities and other public entities to conduct feasibility assessments for the construction or conversion of heating systems, in existing or new buildings, to heating systems that use wood biomass fuel. Grant funding will support a minimum of three feasibility studies.

What is Biomass?

Biomass is any biological material that can be used as fuel to produce heat, electricity, or both. Wood biomass includes wood chips and

other low-grade wood wastes. Other common biomass fuels are agricultural crop residues and farm animal wastes.

Why Use Biomass For



Merrimack Valley High School recently constructed this wood chip biomass boiler to heat its physical plant.

Energy?

Biomass is a renewable fuel. It makes sense to use biomass in place of conventional, non-renewable fuels— oil, gas, and coal— for several good reasons:

- Biomass fuel is a local product.
- Biomass is easy to use and has high energy content.
- Biomass fuel prices are generally lower and more stable.
- Biomass energy is good for the environment.
- Workshops & Tours are scheduled for March 25, 26 & 27. Contact North Country RC&D for details.

Biomass Heating Tidbits

Schools in Vermont have been converting to wood biomass for close to 30 years. Below is some information about their 2005-2006 heating season:

- Average annual fuel savings of \$42,000 per school.
- 80 percent reduction in the amount of fossil fuels (equivalent to 70,000 gallons of oil).
- See www.biomasscenter.org for more details.

Wool Industry: starts on page 1...

The project has received a Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) through the NRCS Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) in the amount of \$48,500.

This grant provides for the chemical analysis of the effluent, the establishment of a small scale effluent treatment facility, and a mechanism to share the technology and results with the public.

The Northern Heritage Mills is working with the

Southern NH RC&D Council to demonstrate this technology.

If successful at a small scale, the same techniques can be applied to a commercial scale operation, the development of which would provide a desperately needed local service to New England farmers and help to sustain the local agricultural economy.



Samples of the wool washing effluent were analyzed via centrifuge to determine what type of machine would be needed to separate the solids, liquids and grease.

North Country RC&D is Bringing the Heat to Groveton New Hampshire

The Village of Groveton, NH is the site of an exciting new initiative that could have far reaching benefits. Financial assistance from the US Dept of Commerce and the Coos County Sudden and Severe Impact Program, has been awarded to the North Country RC&D by the North Country Council (Regional Planning Commission and EDA District).

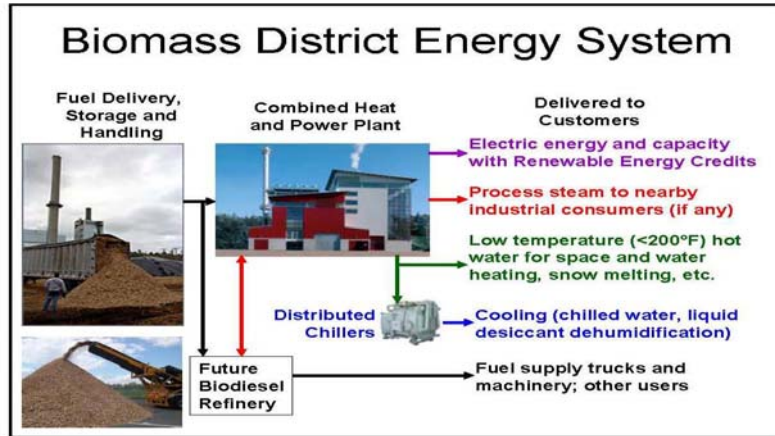
North Country RC&D is coordinating a project that will investigate the feasibility of supplying energy in the form of hot water and/or steam to facilitate business growth and heating of the village area.

An Advisory Committee made up of local residents, technical experts in this field and sponsoring organizations has been developed.

The first step in that process is to provide information on just what distributed energy and district heating can do. To solicit feedback from the community on the project a Public Informational Meeting was held on January 22, 2008.

A unique partnership of firms has been hired to conduct this

work. Horizon Engineering of Littleton, NH has partnered with Ramboll Denmark. Horizon Engineering knows the Village of Groveton through years of public works projects. Ramboll Denmark, a Danish firm, has years of experience designing and constructing district heating systems.



Demand for food in New Hampshire is up 40% over last year and supply is down 30%, which is striking in the state with the lowest reliance on food banks.

The New Hampshire Food Bank Struggles With Increased Demands and Decreased Supplies

Across the country food banks are struggling to meet the demands for those in need and the New Hampshire Food Bank is no different. To offset the unusually high demands and low supplies, the food bank has had to search for alternate ways to supple-

ment their dwindling stocks.

Through an agreement with the Youth Development Center (YDC) in Manchester, the New Hampshire Food Bank will begin operating a quarter acre garden on the land owned by the YDC.

The UNH Cooperative Extension and the South-

ern New Hampshire RC&D council are working with the food bank to help manage the land. The future goal is to expand the size of the garden, further increasing its productivity allowing the food bank to be less reliant on continuously declining donations.

North Country Farm Fresh Co-op

Small and emerging farmers in the Colebrook, NH area are working together to form a marketing cooperative that will provide food to local restaurants and other markets. The North Country Farm Fresh Cooperative is being assisted by the North Country RC&D. NCR&D is acting as fiscal agent and grant applicant for a Rural Business Enterprise Grant that will be used (if approved) to develop a business plan for the emerging cooperative

as well as the individual members of the coop.

At present close to 20 farms and 5 restaurants are involved in the project. Other project partners to date include the Cooperative Development Institute, UNH Cooperative Extension Service and the NH Department of Agriculture, Markets and Food as well as several Colebrook area businesses and individuals.

The Project evolved because

farmers have not been able to effectively sell their produce, or receive competitive prices, because individually they did not produce enough to meet the demand. By collaborating with other farmers and a marketing/distribution system provided by the Cooperative, these farmers are looking forward to focusing on producing higher volume, high quality produce, while the Cooperative co-ordinates orders from local markets and distributes the products when harvested.

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719 North Main Street - Room 220
Laconia, NH 03246-2772

RC&D is Looking for New Members



Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) is a national program put into action to address local concerns by local people. The North Country and Southern NH RC&D Areas are part of a national network of volunteer directed, independent, not-for-profit councils organized by the people who live in their area. RC&D Councils are supported in part by the US Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service under the authority of Public Law 107-171.

RC&D Councils are always looking for new partnerships and individuals who share their vision. If you have an interest in the work of Resource Conservation and Development Councils, please contact either of our two offices in New Hampshire. Also please visit our website: www.nhrcd.net.

Contact:

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Phone: (603) 527-2093

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