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Prototype bio-methane powered tractor set to make energy-independent farming a reality for British farmers

- *New Holland brings prototype methane-powered tractor to the UK*
- *Methane-powered tractors emit 80% fewer pollutants and could achieve fuel cost savings of 25 – 40%*
- *Methane-powered tractors could offer energy independence for farms*
- *Wyke Farms (Somerset cheddar producers) and Worthy Farm (home to Glastonbury Festival) test the new tractor this week*



PRESS RELEASE

A new prototype tractor that runs on bio-methane produced by farm waste from 1000 dairy cows has been tested by British farmers this week. The tractor, developed by New Holland Agriculture has the potential to reduce polluting emissions by 80% and offer farmers significant savings in fuel costs.

Wyke Farms – one of the UK's biggest cheddar producers, and Worthy Farm – home to Glastonbury Festival, are both testing the tractor this week and are excited about the possibilities a methane-powered tractor presents.

New Holland has developed the new tractor, which can run entirely on bio-methane derived from waste and produced by on-farm biogas (anaerobic digester) plants. It could reduce polluting emissions by 80% and offer fuel cost savings of between 25 and 40%.

Wyke Farms in Bruton, Somerset has been producing cheddar cheese and other dairy products for over 150 years and is passionate about its '100% Green' initiative which has recently earned it a handful of awards. While some farmers may dream of being energy independent, Wyke Farms has achieved it.

The farm's biogas plant plays a big part in meeting its sustainability objectives, with three large anaerobic digesters producing electricity for the farm and factory. The resulting gas is cleaned up and used to power the farm's boilers, with excess sold back to the grid to serve the local community.

The digesters are fed entirely from waste; including slurry from the farm's 1000 dairy cows, local cider apple waste, and other waste not fit for human or animal consumption.

The farm runs three electric cars and in the future could run its tankers on compressed natural gas (CNG) produced by the biogas plant. Having a compression plant on-site would also give Wyke Farms the opportunity to invest in tractors powered by methane – giving them complete energy independence on the farm.

The natural gas (methane) powered tractor has been developed by New Holland as a 100% sustainable solution to the increasing cost of fuel. Not only that, but as the number of on-farm biogas plants in the UK increases, there could be an ample supply of fuel on the doorstep.

New Holland's methane tractor borrows from commercial vehicle technology already used by its sister brand, Iveco. The use of compressed natural gas in vans, trucks and buses is well developed and limited only by storage capacity on the vehicle. The company has managed to squeeze 300L (52kg) of compressed methane into nine tanks around the tractor; enough for around six hours of work depending on the type of activity. Refuelling is quick, taking around the same time to fill as with diesel.

Roger Clothier, Wyke Farms' Farm Director who is testing the prototype tractor said: "On first impression it looks and feels just like a normal tractor when you jump in the cab. It easily managed to tow a full slurry tanker up and down the hills here – with a combined tractor and tanker weight of 27 tonnes.

"We need fuel efficient vehicles with a good power to weight ratio to pull heavy tanks around the farm – the tractor has the power to do it and if we're able to compress our gas on-site it looks like it could save us money.

"In the future, sharing of gas power between local farms could be a possibility, particularly where you have a big plant like ours. Providing a local filling point for neighbouring farms makes economic sense and the associated savings from methane-powered tractors could help dairy farmers reduce their costs, which can only be a good thing."

Adapting existing engine technology, fitting a small three-way catalytic converter and housing it within a standard tractor chassis and cab means that the methane tractor looks and drives just like a diesel-powered tractor, and the cost of buying one should be about the same.

After a week of testing in the UK, the tractor will tour other European markets where it will undergo further testing and evaluation before returning to its home in Italy at La Bellotta, New Holland's 'Energy Independent Farm', where the company has been working towards its Clean Energy Leader strategy for the past 10 years.

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PRESS RELEASE

Wyke Farms Ltd is a family run company based in the heart of the Somerset cheddar-making region. The art of traditional cheese making will never be lost on the Somerset farm where the Clothier family have been making cheddar in Somerset since 1861. Today, Wyke Farms is one of the largest independent cheese makers and milk processors in the UK producing over 13000 tonnes of cheddar per year to the same award winning 150-year-old recipe.

The Wyke Farms brand is the 4th largest brand in the Cheddar category and the only independent company in the top 10 cheese brands with retail sales of over 60 million.

Wyke remains a truly traditional family business. Ivy's grandsons Richard and Tom now run the cheese making operations with their father John, whilst her other two Grandsons David and Roger run the family dairy farming operations. The four grandchildren share Ivy's passion for cheese making where flavour, texture and taste are paramount. They believe that this attention to detail is the reason that their cheese has won more awards at national cheese shows than any other.

Wyke Farms are committed to sustainable farming and are proud to be the UK's first national cheddar brand to become 100% self-sufficient in green energy. Wyke Farms sources all of its electricity and gas from both solar and biogas, generated from the farm and dairy waste. The biogas energy is generated from its own anaerobic digester (AD) plant, which saves Wyke Farms over 20 million kilos of carbon dioxide per annum.

They have received national and international recognition for their on going commitment to sustainability.

Managing Director Rich Clothier has been recognised for his passion and commitment to sustainability. He won the Food Manufacture Excellence Awards 2013 'Personality of the Year', The UK & Biogas Industry Awards 'AD Hero of the Year' and Farmers' Weekly 'Sustainable Farmer of the Year' 2014 Award.

www.wykefarms.com

<http://www.facebook.com/wykefarms>



<http://it.youtube.com/user/NewHollandAG>



www.flickr.com/photos/newholland



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