

CNH Industrial and Fiat Chrysler Automobiles at the first ever “Biomethane Day”

Basildon, December 2, 2014

"Biomethane Day", a meeting organised by the Italian Biogas Consortium (CIB), Assogasmetano and NGV Italy in partnership with CNH Industrial and Fiat Chrysler Automobiles, was held yesterday in Isola della Scala (Verona, Italy). Italian Government representatives in attendance at the event included Barbara Degani, the Undersecretary for the Environment and Giuseppe Castiglione, the Undersecretary for Agriculture.

The meeting took place before over 100 participants, including institutional stakeholders as well as stakeholders from agricultural, industrial, natural gas and biomethane for transport sectors. It provided an opportunity to explore the event's setting: La Torre, a Zootechnical Agricultural Cooperative in Isola della Scala. La Torre serves as a real world case study for how the use of biomethane can improve the competitiveness of agricultural enterprises, develop innovation and create stable jobs.

Mario Guidi (President of Confagricultura), Daniele Chiari (Head of Product Planning & Institutional Relations at Fiat Chrysler Automobiles), Michele Ziosi (Head of Institutional Relations for Europe, Africa and Middle East at CNH Industrial) and Piero Gattoni (President of the CIB) spoke during the course of the day. Each highlighted the potential of biomethane in terms of reducing CO₂ emissions.

Biomethane enhances the industrial sector's expertise in natural gas, a field in which Italy is one of the world leaders. It is obtained by a process of "upgrading" biogas and can be produced from animal waste, agro-industrial by-products and crop integration. It possesses similar characteristics to natural gas and enables similar operation. Furthermore, biomethane could be inserted into the natural gas network and used as an advanced form of biofuel for transport and agricultural machinery.

In addition to these attributes, biomethane has a highly strategic value for both the transport sector and European environmental policies. It has the potential to help enforce the Directive 2009/28/EC on Renewable Energy, which requires that by 2020 European states achieve at least a 10% share of total energy consumption from renewable sources.

In 2012, Italy became the world's third strongest country in the field of agricultural biogas, following China and Germany. With €4.5 billion in investments, the country has over 1,000 systems at work in different agribusinesses with some 900 megawatts of installed capacity – the equivalent of an annual production of 1.8 billion cubic metres of natural gas.

A genuine chain reaction: biomethane has created opportunities extending over a range of activities from the agricultural machinery sector to seed companies and farms as well as manufacturers of biogas, components, natural gas vehicles and automotive products. In just a few years, nearly 12,000 permanent jobs have been created and many more positions could be generated with the approval for the implementation of the regulations proposed in the 5 December 2013 Decree on biomethane.

The production of biomethane in the agricultural sector represents an important new opportunity to increase the competitiveness of farms, giving value to waste and byproducts; in turn this has a significant impact on the revenues of agribusinesses. During the meeting, Government representatives pledged their intent to finalise and implement the necessary rules and procedures to ensure that operators throughout the supply chain will have all the necessary tools to begin agricultural biomethane production during the course of 2015.

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