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GOVERNMENT OF CANADA HELPS FARMERS TURN WASTE INTO PROFITABLE ENERGY



The Government of Canada is making smart investments to boost the local economy, create jobs and new markets for farmers and vegetable processors. Dave Van Kesteren, Member of Parliament for Chatham-Kent-Essex, today announced a federal repayable contribution of up to \$1.6 million to help Seacliff Energy Inc. construct a new facility to transform waste into clean energy and fertilizer.

"The Government of Canada is delivering tangible results to farmers and food processors by helping them lower operational costs and develop new revenue opportunities," said Mr. Van Kesteren, on behalf of Federal Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz. "Local farmers, greenhouse producers and vegetable processors will now have a better way of disposing of waste and a less expensive, richer source of fertilizer from the facility."

This investment will help Seacliff Energy Inc. build an anaerobic digestion facility to transform vegetable waste from local farms and greenhouses into electricity that can be sold to the Ontario power grid, into heat that can be sold to greenhouses, and into organic matter that can be sold as natural fertilizer.

The project is expected to create ten jobs during the construction stage as well as three full-time and one part-time permanent jobs and generate \$2 million in annual company revenue by 2010. The facility is expected to open in the fall of 2009.

"Fuel costs have killed us in the last few years and we're looking forward to a less expensive, more consistent and greener source of heat and energy," said Dennis Dick, Seacliff partner and owner of the adjacent greenhouse. "Everywhere you look there are benefits. We get organic, nutrient-rich fertilizer from the digester and the waste from our greenhouse will be fed back into the digester."

For more information on the Agri-Opportunities program please visit www.agr.gc.ca/agri-opportunities.

BACKGROUNDER

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The two-stage agriculture biodigestion technology is a Canadian first. It works like a cow's stomach, which works in stages, breaking down up to 40,000 metric tonnes of waste, consisting of up to 50 types of material, by using different bacteria and temperatures. The single-stage digesters that are currently used in Canadian municipal landfills work more slowly and they can generally only break down one type of waste at a time.

Seacliff will collect waste such as cucumbers and cucumber prunings, corn silage, and dairy cattle and swine manure. The digestion process will generate enough biogas and thermal heat to operate the adjacent cucumber and tomato greenhouse owned by Pellee Hydroponics. Seacliff will sell excess electricity to the Ontario power grid, and local corn producers are planning to buy the natural fertilizer, or "digestate," that is leftover from the process.

Food processing plants normally pay tipping fees to landfills for taking their waste. Seacliff will charge lower tipping fees which will save the food processors money while reducing expansion at landfills. Landfills are becoming a problem in the area because there are so many food processing plants in the area. This project will also remove the equivalent of 5,217 tonnes of CO2 per year. This calculation is based on the CO2 produced by all parties involved in the project.

The participating greenhouses and food processing plants will reduce operational costs and increase efficiency, and will pave the way for similar facilities to be introduced into individual farms and local communities. Within a 50 km radius there are 10,000 acres of greenhouses and 5 major food processing plants. Farmers could pool their resources together to purchase the technology, which would reduce their operating costs and introduce new revenue streams.

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The Agri-Opportunities Program, a \$134 million five year program, was launched in January 2007 and is delivered nationally by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. Projects funded by the program aim to increase market opportunities for the Canadian agriculture industry and benefit farmers by generating demand for agricultural products.

For more information about Agri-Opportunities and other AAFC programs, please visit our website: www.agr.gc.ca (Programs and Services section).



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