

# **What is Biogas?**

**the current and potential biogas market**

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American Biogas Council

americanbiogascouncil.org

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# Overview

- How Biogas is Made (Feedstocks & how systems work)
- How Biogas is Used (including digestate)
- Biogas Market Today & its Potential



# Food Scraps





# Wastewater Solids





# Manure







## Organic material is delivered to the digester system

This may include animal manure, food scraps, agricultural residues, or wastewater solids.

*Digested material may be returned for livestock, agricultural and gardening uses.*



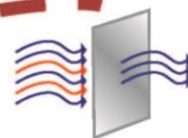
## Organic material is broken down in a digester

The digester uses a natural biological process under controlled conditions to break down organic material into products for beneficial use or disposal.

*Some biogas can be used to heat the digester.*

BIOGAS

DIGESTED MATERIAL



## Raw biogas is processed

Typically, water, carbon dioxide and other trace compounds are removed, depending on the end use, leaving mostly methane.



## Processed biogas is distributed and used

The gas may be used to produce heat, electricity, vehicle fuel or injected into natural gas pipelines.

SOLIDS

LIQUIDS



## Digested material is processed and distributed

Solids and liquids from the digester may be used to produce marketable products, like fertilizer, compost, soil amendments or animal bedding.

### organic material

Organic materials are the "input" or "feedstock" for a biogas system. Some organic materials will digest more readily than others. Restaurant fats, oils and grease; animal manures; wastewater solids; food scraps; and by-products from food and beverage production are some of the most commonly-digested materials. A single anaerobic digester may be built for a single material or a combination of them.

### the digester

An anaerobic digester is one or more airtight tanks that can be equipped for mixing and warming organic material. Naturally occurring microorganisms thrive in the zero-oxygen environment and break down (digest) organic matter into usable products such as biogas and digested materials. The system will continuously produce biogas and digested material as long as the supply of organic material is continuous, and the process remains inside the system.

### biogas processing

Biogas is mostly methane, the primary component of natural gas, and carbon dioxide, plus water vapor, and other trace compounds (e.g. siloxanes and hydrogen sulfide). Biogas can replace natural gas in almost any application, but first it must be processed to remove non-methane compounds. The level of processing varies depending on the final application.

### biogas distribution

Processed biogas, often called "biomethane" or "renewable natural gas," can be used the same way you use fossil natural gas: to produce heat, electricity, or vehicle fuel, or to inject into natural gas pipelines. The decision to choose one use over another is largely driven by local markets.

### digested material

In addition to biogas, digesters produce solid and liquid digested material, containing valuable nutrients (nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium) and organic carbon. Typically, raw digested material, or "digestate," is processed into a wide variety of products like fertilizer, compost, soil amendments, or animal bedding, depending on the initial feedstock and local markets. These "co-products" can be sold to agricultural, commercial and residential customers.

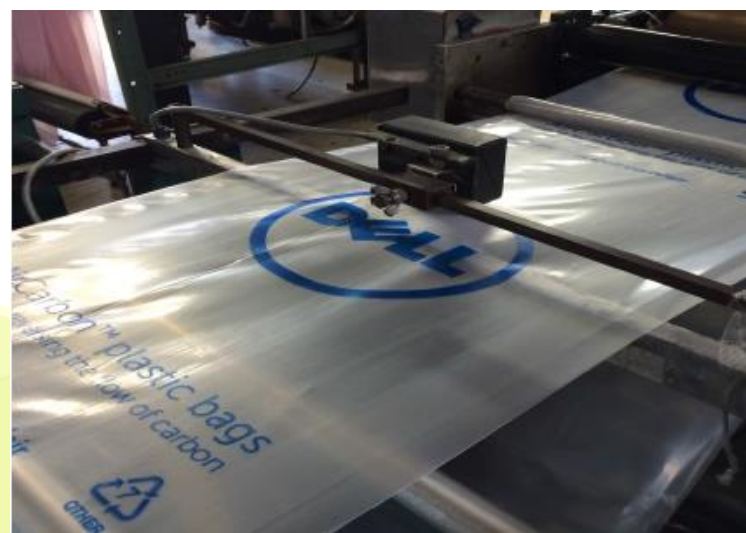


# Digesters





# Energy (gas)



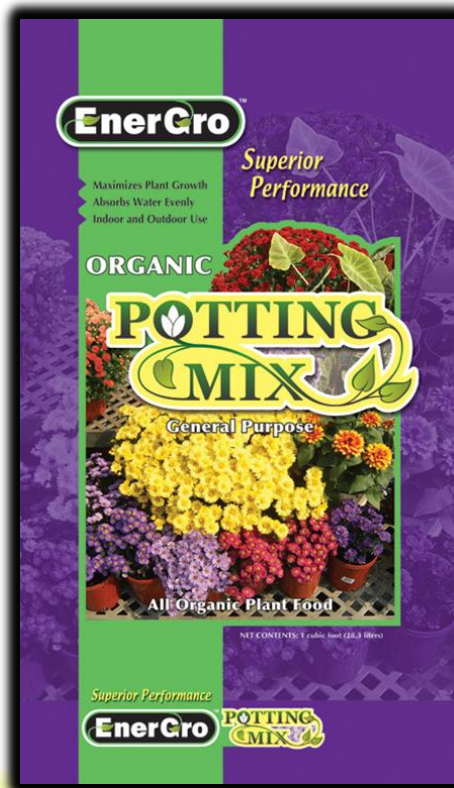
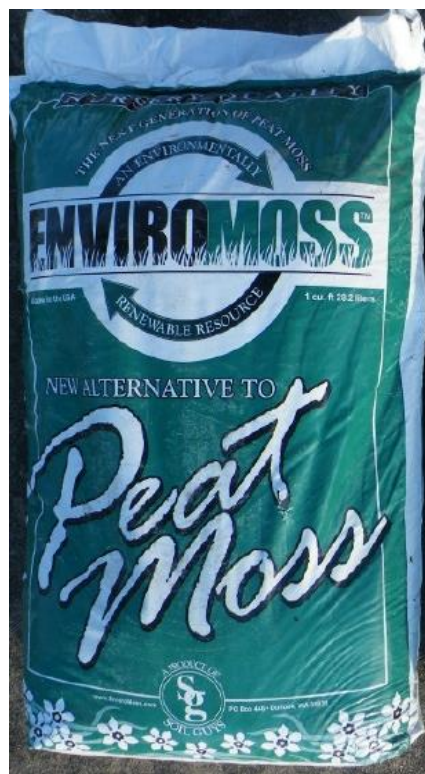


# Digestate (liquid+ Solids)





# Digestate Products





# U.S. Biogas Market – Current and Potential

247

on Farm

(dairy, swine only)

1,269

Water

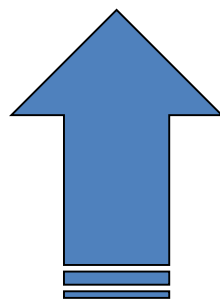
(860 using their biogas)

39

Food Scrap

652

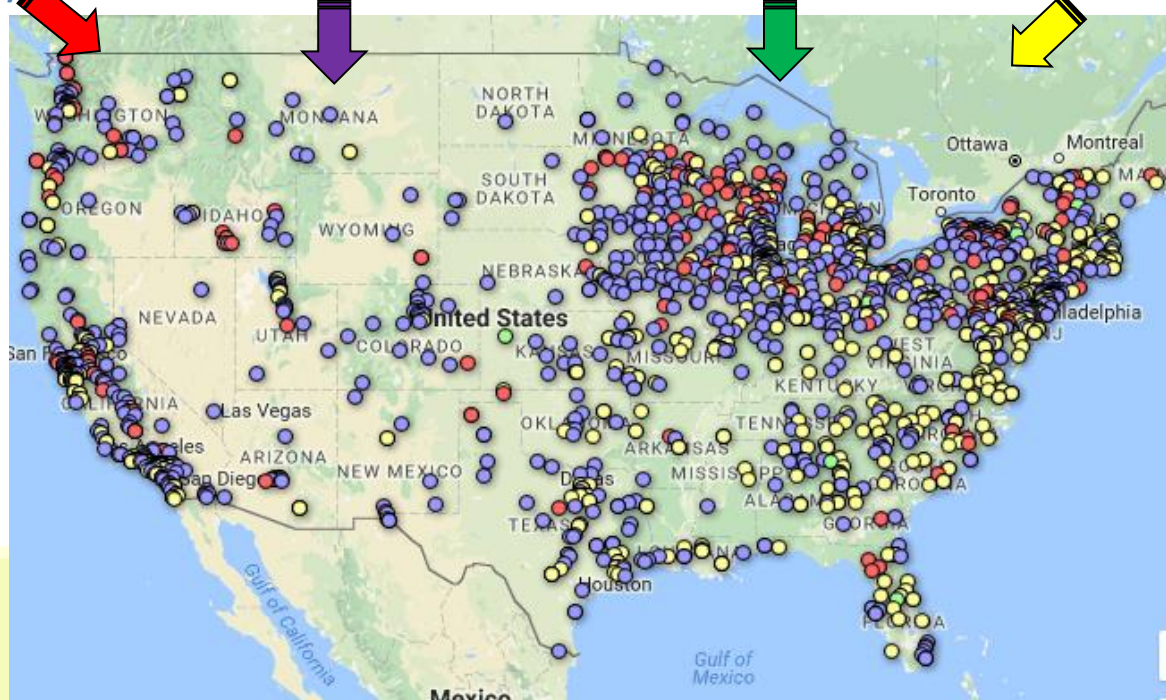
at Landfills



2,200+

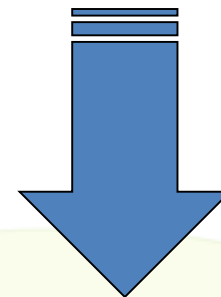
Operational

Biogas  
Systems



13,500+

Potential  
New Biogas  
Systems



8,241

on Farm

(dairy, swine only)

3,888

Water

(incl. 380 not using their biogas)

931

Food Scrap

415

at Landfills