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EPA Helps Farmers Turn Livestock Waste into Wealth

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(Washington, D.C. - Jan. 18, 2007) EPA and its partners have released guidance that can help farmers manage livestock waste and boost farm earnings while reducing greenhouse gases. Processing livestock manure under controlled conditions can produce biogas, a source of greenhouse gas emissions. Farmers also benefit because the biogas can be used to generate electricity.

"Using biogas has multiple benefits; it decreases greenhouse gas emissions, produces renewable energy for rural communities, and safeguards local air and water quality," said Bill Wehrum, EPA's acting assistant administrator of Air and Radiation. "This guidance will help farmers and potential investors make informed choices about which systems work best for farms, for profits, and for our environment."

Biogas is made up of methane and carbon dioxide. Because methane is more than 20 times as potent as carbon dioxide at trapping heat in the atmosphere, capturing biogas provides significant environmental benefits. Also, farmers and project developers can increase their incomes by using biogas for on-site electricity generation or delivery to a local electric utility.

Waste methane recovery systems, also known as anaerobic digestion systems, are estimated to be feasible at about 7,000 dairy and swine operations in the United States. In 2005, about 110 systems were operational or under construction, and another 80 were in the planning stages.

The standardized guidance was developed jointly by EPA's AgStar program, the Association of State Energy Research and Technology Transfer Institutions, and USDA. The guidance will provide a standardized method that will allow farm operators and investors to compare the effectiveness of available waste methane recovery systems.

AgStar is a voluntary program that encourages the use of waste methane

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recovery systems on dairy and swine farms. Each year, these systems have reduced methane by about 1.5 million metric tons of CO2 equivalent, while providing enough renewable energy to power over 20,000 average American homes. The program also assists countries throughout the world in developing biogas recovery projects through the Methane to Markets Partnership.

[Information on the AgStar Protocol: epa.gov/agstar/resources/protocol.html](http://epa.gov/agstar/resources/protocol.html)

[General information on Methane to Markets Partnership: epa.gov/methanetomarkets](http://epa.gov/methanetomarkets)

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