

Supplement to ManSEA Press Release

The Agricultural Producer and Renewable Energy

If you are like many agricultural producers/rural residents who have been watching and listening to the news lately, you may be wondering “what does global warming, greenhouse gases and renewable energy have to do with me”? There may be a tendency to shrug it off with the attitude that “this too will pass”, but as we look at the various facets of producing and utilizing renewable energy, we begin to appreciate that there may be many opportunities for producers to be involved.

Presently one organization that is focusing its’ attention on this issue is the Manitoba Sustainable Energy Association (ManSEA). ManSEA is a relatively new organization that was formed in 2005 to represent the interests of landowners/farmers, municipalities, companies investing in renewable energy production, and individuals in policy development efforts designed to expand renewable and sustainable energy production in the province. “ The mission of ManSEA is to promote the use and production of renewable, sustainable, environmentally friendly energy sources within Manitoba.”

As agricultural producers your interest in renewable energy may focus mainly on how you can sell your wheat to an ethanol plant to better your bottom line. With the huge swing towards grain to ethanol production in the US and increasing interest in Canada, this interest is understandable. Some among you may be considering the opportunities for producing canola for bio-diesel production and thereby securing another market and hopefully better prices for your canola. Ethanol production and bio-diesel production are two of the more obvious renewable energy production opportunities that come to mind. There are, however, other opportunities that seem to be gaining in feasibility as we move ahead in this field – producing heat and energy from biomass is one of these. Also the development of large and small wind energy production is gaining momentum.

Last fall a number of Manitobans visited Sweden and Denmark to learn more about the biomass to energy situation and in particular the production of biomass (wood, agricultural residues) pellets for heat and power. They came back from that trip sold on the idea that there may be a significant market in northern Europe for this product. Many also became convinced that there may be considerable opportunities for the production and marketing of Canadian pellets (from wood or agricultural products) into these markets. Rapid advances in technology are also having a very positive influence on the economics of biomass to energy.

Returning to the question of “what does all this mean to me?”, ManSEA with the support of the MAFRI Covering New Ground program, along with local sponsors has arranged a series of Renewable Energy Workshops. Attend one of these workshops and learn more about the opportunities and challenges for you and your community in the renewable energy field.

Russell Community Centre March 9, 07 8:45 am – 4:00 pm
(to register contact MAFRI GO Centre at 773-5130 by March 6. \$15 (lunch included)

For more information contact:

Carl Cunningham 571-6177
Wayne Digby 727-1394