

Factory Farm Biogas Is a False Solution to Climate Change

By Food and Water Watch

Fossil Fuel and agribusiness are joining forces to promote a greenwashed nightmare - manure as “renewable” energy. Manure digesters capture methane from decomposing manure to create “Biogas” which can be used to create electricity or converted into natural gas and moved through pipelines. But Biogas is a false solution, and it won’t address our climate change crisis, our rampant water pollution, or our factory farm problem.

Biogas technology is being promoted as “renewable” energy and a water pollution solution across the United States and Europe. The increase in Biogas production can be attributed to renewable energy policies backed by the European Union, which promotes Biogas as economically and environmentally beneficial, and in the U.S. where agribusiness interests like Smithfield Foods have lobbied for subsidies from several levels of government.

In reality, this worldwide promotion of Biogas as “Renewable” by agribusinesses and fracking and natural gas industries is misleading and harmful. Burning dirty Biogas releases carbon dioxide and other pollutants including smog-forming nitrogen oxides, ammonia and hydrogen sulfide, potentially offsetting other greenhouse gas reductions. Additionally, Biogas is comprised of roughly 50 to 70 percent methane, a potent greenhouse gas, nearly 90 times more powerful than carbon dioxide.

The focus on the supposedly “Renewable” nature of Biogas ignores the many environmental



Large Scale Methane Digester rely on manure from factory farms. It creates methane and other pollution. This one is like the that “exploded” near Waunakee leaking manure into Lake Mendota

Photo Source: Cap Times -Mike DeVries

and health threats posed by a major source of this gas - manure from massive factory farms. Factory farms place our public health and food supply at risk, pollute the environment and our drinking water, and wreck rural communities - while increasing corporate control over our food. Manure digesters will not address any of these issues, and in fact will only further entrench the factory farm model by creating a new market for the enormous amount of waste they produce.

Factory farms in the U.S. are also predominately located in low-income communities and communities of color. The placement of digesters in these communities will only exacerbate the existing environmental degradation through the increased presence of factory farms to facilitate biogas production, the use of diesel trucks to cart manure to and from digesters, and the invasive construction of pipelines to move biogas.

As the threats of global climate change and fossil fuel dependence

are increasingly being felt worldwide, we do not have time to entertain false solutions like Biogas. Investing in natural gas infrastructure and factory farm-linked Biogas shifts critical resources away from efforts to reduce emissions and to develop truly renewable energy. It is time to invest in a just transition to a 100 percent, zero emission, clean energy future, not a factory farm Biogas.

We need to work together at the state and federal levels to oppose the buildup of biogas infrastructure including tax incentives or other forms of public support for the expansion of biogas, the inclusion of animal manure-based power in the definition of renewable energy and in renewable energy credit or incentive programs, the award of renewable energy grants or loans for the construction of anaerobic digesters on livestock operations, and new pipeline construction.

*For more information and to get involved go to:
www.foodandwaterwatch.org*

Save the Date!

Saturday November 14th 2020

5:00 pm CST -On Line - Family Farm Defenders Annual Meeting

7:00 pm CST - Virtual - John Kinsman Beginning Farmer Food Sovereignty Prize Award

All Members and Allies Welcome

Featuring this Year's Winner Catatumbo Cooperative Farm in Chicago!



We will also be sharing success stories from previous prize winners.

We will also provide a tribute to FFD Founder and Grassroots Food Sovereignty Champion John Kinsman with photos and reflections from his family and friends.

Catatumbo Cooperative Farm was named after a unique lighting phenomenon in Venezuela.

Jazmin Martinez, Nadia Sol Ireri Unzueta Carrasco, and Vivianna Moreno founded Catatumbo Cooperative Farm in 2008 after attending Black and Latinx Farmer Immersion Program hosted by Soul Fire Farm. Being queer immigrants with strong family histories tied to agriculture and displacement, they came into vegetable CSA farming after many years of campus organizing, immigrant rights work, and environmental justice activism. Among their food sovereignty goals is building intentional relationships with other farmers of color and advocating for communal land stewardship versus individual property ownership.

To quote from Catatumbo Cooperative Farm Prize's Winning Essay:

“We strive to share our knowledge and resources whenever feasible because we believe by building a strong network of support we are helping to build stronger communities, working from a framework where collaboration and diversity builds abundance, resilience and understanding, reshaping our relationships to each other into ones of solidarity and care toward past and future members of our communities, human and non-human alike.”

In recognition of their success, Catatumbo Cooperative Farm received a \$2,000 Award

They joined a long list of other proud winners of the Prize named in honor of John Kinsman, founder and long-time president of Family Farm Defenders who passed away at age 87 on MLK Day, 2014. John Kinsman was not only an early pioneer of organic grass-based dairy in the Midwest, but was also a tireless champion of civil rights, social justice, and food sovereignty both in the U.S. and around the world.

Since 2011 We have had 15 John Kinsman Prize Winners! Some of which will be joining this Year's FFD Virtual Award Celebration

Login details for both the 2020 FFD Annual Meeting and the John Kinsman Prize Ceremony on Sat. Nov 14 will be available soon via FFD Facebook page and website. Both events are free, though tax deductible donations to support this year's John Kinsman Prize, as well as our future ones, are most welcome. Sponsors will be mentioned in publicity and any donation over \$50 will receive a FFD t-shirt, as well! Donations can be made by sending a check to: FFD, P.O. 1772 Madison, WI 53701 or via credit card on our website: www.familyfarmers.org

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