Background and description of the good practice

Initial discussions between representatives from Severn Wye Energy agency, the Anaerobic Digestion and Bioresources Association (ADBA) and the Renewable Energy Association (REA) highlighted a gap in training provision for small scale AD plant owners. Further discussions with the Environment Agency confirmed this particularly for the unregulated plant. As a result of this, a decision was made to look at options for developing short and concise training modules available on dvd and youtube.

Severn Wye Energy Agency exhibited the Biogas Action project at the prestigious Energy Now Exhibition in Telford in February. This exhibition is the main event for farmers and landowners interested in renewable energy in the UK. The stand drew many visitors interested in AD. In addition to the stand, Severn Wye provided a one hour free training session, the aim being to address the gap in training provision highlighted by previous discussions and to provide a guide to critical aspects of running an AD plant efficiently, effectively and safely.

The main trainer of the session was Amaya Arias-Garcia who is the Technical Director of GOALS, Project Management and Engineering Solutions. She is hugely respected within the AD sector and is one of the best people in the UK to provide advice on this subject. She was supported by Nick Green of the Environment Agency who provided the regulators view of best practice and some of the most important lessons learned to date. The session was filmed, and is currently being edited.

Four main themes emerged from the training and it is these themes that are forming the chapters/modules of the short videos.
Training for small scale AD plant owners

1. Being a considerate neighbour – looks at issues such as odour management, spreading, and noise;
2. Avoiding pollution – includes plant ruptures, bunding, leaks, gases and soil health;
3. Keeping safe – alarms, gases, spares, naked lights
4. Gritting and foaming – how to avoid and remedy

It is hoped the video will be ready in the very near future.

Aims and Objectives of This Action
The main aim of this training package is to address the day to day risks of running a plant.

How this Action could be Replicated
This activity can be easily replicated where a gap in training provision has been identified. One of the main barriers may be acquiring skilled professionals to provide their knowledge, however it is reasonable to assume that this should not be a problem.

Lessons Learnt
Developing this training video has been a steep learning curve. With the knowledge that the attention span of most people viewing YouTube is approx. 3 minutes, we had to work hard to get each message across effectively within this timeframe. It was a case of less is definitely more!

One of the main lessons we learned throughout this process is the importance of checking technical equipment prior to filming.

The main strength of this project is the time and effort given freely by Amaya and Nick.

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