

Chairman Thompson and members of the committee.

I want to take this time to thank you for the invitation to speak about my green energy experience. I am here to share my story about manure-to-energy and the value added to Reinford Farms in Mifflintown, PA. By utilizing USDA incentives, in conjunction with a bank loan, we were able to invest in an anaerobic digester. With this digester, I am reducing manure odors, creating cow bedding, drying grain, pasteurizing calf milk and producing electricity. This activity results in additional income for the farm and public benefits to the community.

My experience began eight years ago when we sent one of our three sons to college to major in business. He came home after his second year of school and said to me that we should be looking at renewable energy and one of the suggestions was an aerobic digester. He got my wheels spinning and I educated myself by touring a few other digesters in the United States.

For those who are not familiar with the process, anaerobic digestion is a series of biological processes in which microorganisms break down biodegradable material in the absence of oxygen. One of the end products is biogas, or biomethane, which is combusted to generate electricity and heat, or can be processed into renewable natural gas and transportation fuels. Biogas can be cleaned up and inserted into existing natural gas infrastructure.

I talked to a very helpful gentlemen from Lancaster PA who had 23 years of digester experience. He gave me a few good pointers and I was sold. I found a biogas company that had been building digesters for more than 25 years. I had a feasibility study done by them to see if it would work. They told me I would need about 800 cows to make it cash flow. So I decided to enlarge my herd to reach that goal. But in the meantime I started adding food waste from local food chains, including 40 Walmart and Sam's Club stores in the region. I was surprised to find that it doubled my biogas output which maximized my electricity generation capacity. So I leveled at 500 cows.

We are powering our whole farm along with 80 to 100 homes. The heat from the generator set supplies heat for the large farm house, repair shop, our farm offices, hot water for the dairy barn, pasteurizes milk for the newborn calves, and dries 40,000 bushels of corn per year. We separate the solids for cow bedding and sell the excess. The energy savings has been a great benefit to our business and has been a benefit to our environment too.

The deciding factor of whether or not we would go ahead with the digester was being able to receive grant money to help finance this project. We received grant money from USDA's REAP program and some from PA Energy Harvest. We also applied for low interest money from SEDA-Council of Governments.

Without the support of the USDA and the state, we will start losing ground in this technology on a lot of dairy farms. According to the American Biogas Council, there are 8,200 dairy and swine farms nationwide today that could support a digester. However, there are just under 200 farm based digesters in operation today. By comparison, there are over 10,000 digesters currently in operation in Europe.

My feasibility study showed that biogas would be a long-term win-win for my farm and the surrounding community. The REAP Program has helped many farmers complete the initial feasibility study to determine whether a digester makes sense for them. REAP provides farmers a long-lasting safety net by cutting input costs and developing new revenue sources. It also serves the public interest by increasing energy security, and cutting energy-related pollution. And USDA estimates that REAP has created or saved 15,000 jobs in 2010 and 2011.

I am passionate about telling my story so that we can continue to build digesters on farms to make us a leader in renewable energy and to promote rural economic self-sufficiency. We need the government to be a financial supporter of these projects so that we can achieve this goal.

Thank you again. I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.

REINFORD FARMS PHOTO ADDENDUM

Reinford Family



Reinford Farms Dairy Barn



Digester



Digester Engine and Generator



Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives
Information Required From Nongovernmental Witnesses

House rules require nongovernmental witnesses to provide their resume or biographical sketch prior to testifying. If you do not have a resume or biographical sketch available, please complete this form.

Name: Steve Reinford

1. Organization you represent: *Reinford Farms Inc. (Family Owned)* _____

2. Please list any occupational, employment, or work-related experience you have which add to your qualification to provide testimony before the Committee: *I have over 30 years in Dairy Farming experience. Eight of those years have been in the agriculture green energy field. For the past 4 years I have been successfully running a digester with the last 2 years providing a good net return.*

3. Please list any special training, education, or professional experience you have which add to your qualifications to provide testimony before the Committee: *I received 2012 pacesetters Award from the Center of Dairy Excellence in Pennsylvania for my environmental stewardship, commitment to renewable energy, and for being an early adopter of new technology. I also received 2012 Master Farmer Award in Pennsylvania.* _____

4. If you are appearing on behalf of an organization, please list the capacity in which you are representing that organization, including any offices or elected positions you hold: _____

PLEASE ATTACH THIS FORM OR YOUR BIOGRAPHY TO EACH COPY OF
TESTIMONY.

Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives
Required Witness Disclosure Form

House Rules* require nongovernmental witnesses to disclose the amount and source of Federal grants received since October 1, 2008.

Name: Steven Reinford

Organization you represent (if any): Reinford Farms Inc.

1. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants and subcontracts) you have received since October 1, 2008, as well as the source and the amount of each grant or contract. House Rules do **NOT** require disclosure of federal payments to individuals, such as Social Security or Medicare benefits, farm program payments, or assistance to agricultural producers:

Source: _____ Amount: _____

Source: _____ Amount: _____

2. If you are appearing on behalf of an organization, please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants and subcontracts) the organization has received since October 1, 2008, as well as the source and the amount of each grant or contract:

Source: _____ Amount: _____

Source: _____ Amount: _____

Please check here if this form is NOT applicable to you: _____

Signature: Steven Reinford

* Rule XI, clause 2(g)(4) of the U.S. House of Representatives provides: *Each committee shall, to the greatest extent practicable, require witnesses who appear before it to submit in advance written statements of proposed testimony and to limit their initial presentations to the committee to brief summaries thereof. In the case of a witness appearing in a nongovernmental capacity, a written statement of proposed testimony shall include a curriculum vitae and a disclosure of the amount and source (by agency and program) of each Federal grant (or subgrant thereof) or contract (or subcontract thereof) received during the current fiscal year or either of the two previous fiscal years by the witness or by any entity represented by the witness.*

PLEASE ATTACH DISCLOSURE FORM TO EACH COPY OF TESTIMONY.