

Anaergia RNG Firm Upgrading Bio-Digester at UC Davis

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The READ facility processes food and grease trap waste daily from local grocery stores and campus dining facilities, converting waste into renewable energy.



Image credit University of California

Renewable natural gas (RNG) developer Anaergia's subsidiary, Anaergia Technologies, has signed agreements to upgrade the Renewable Energy Anaerobic Digester (READ) located at the University of California, Davis (UC Davis).

The READ facility processes food and grease trap waste daily from local grocery stores and campus dining facilities, converting waste into renewable energy. The operation will support California's SB 1383 target by reducing GHG emissions and boosting the economic viability of anaerobic digestion.

Under the terms of the signed and provisional agreements, Anaergia will enhance the READ's systems with Anaergia technology to upgrade the plant for reliable and efficient food waste recycling with power generation. Anaergia expects more than \$4.89 million in revenue from the project.

The California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) is providing a grant to assist in financing the upgrade of the READ.

“With these enhancements, READ will fully capitalize on its environmental benefits,” said Joe Yonkoski, Superintendent of Thermal Infrastructure for UC Davis Facilities Management, in a statement. “We appreciate the partnership with Anaergia that is helping us transform the READ facility as a component of UC Davis’ strategy to reduce fossil fuel reliance and combat climate change.”

The bio-digester project at UC Davis can handle up to 50 tons of organic waste daily, according to the university. The resulting methane gas power microturbines with a generating capacity of 900 kW (nearly 1 MW) and typically create 800 kW of electricity for the campus.

The waste stream comes from a landfill, campus food waste, a winery, brewery and the surrounding community.

Creating a more circular and efficient energy path by converting waste streams into biofuel energy also eliminates methane emissions, which are considered multiple times more damaging as a greenhouse gas than CO₂.

Canada-based Anaergia has developed projects worldwide, including RNG in Japan and bio-methane in Italy in recent months. Among its client include Monterrey One Water, PepsiCo, Michigan State University, FuelCell Energy and Irving Oil.

The work by Anaergia, LF Bioenergy and other waste-to-biofuels firms could grow nearly 8% annually to top \$25 billion by 2032, according to forecasts by Credence Research.

Some of the biofuel conversion work is with animal, food waste and landfills. Others are using technology to convert dairy waste into pipeline ready RNG.

“We are creating positive climate impacts by attacking greenhouse gas emissions in two ways,” said Cyn French, co-founder and leader of feedstock strategy with LF Bioenergy, told EnergyTech in a story posted this February. “We’re capturing methane from dairy waste – before that methane is released into the atmosphere – then converting it to RNG that replaces diesel and thereby reduces transportation emissions.”