

StormFisher Biogas | Toronto

No wasted energy with StormFisher and OCE

How three Ontario entrepreneurs are building Ontario's biogas industry

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Ryan Little
Vice President of Business Development
StormFisher Biogas

With support from the Ontario Centres of Excellence (OCE), three Ontario entrepreneurs are turning organic waste materials from Ontario’s farms and food processing plants into the province’s newest biofuel industry.

Though methane from manure and other organic matter traps 21 times more heat in the atmosphere than carbon dioxide, making it a major contributor to global warming, it’s also a highly potent fuel like natural gas. And, it can be converted into biogas – a form of energy produced through the anaerobic digestion of food processing, agricultural and livestock waste.

In fact, biogas offers a higher energy yield than ethanol, from waste that most people consider to be unusable. For example, one tonne of banana peels can be converted into enough energy to power three trips on Toronto’s longest streetcar line (25 kilometres).

OCE shared the trio’s vision for biogas and helped entrepreneurs and recent MBA graduates Bas van Berkel, Chris Guillon and Ryan Little turn StormFisher Biogas into a North American pioneer in an industry that’s already thriving in Europe.

OCE invested in early-stage research, giving the founders the chance to explore the viability of an Ontario biogas venture. Once the potential was established, OCE connected StormFisher with researchers at the University of Western Ontario (UWO), enabling the start-up to develop a business plan. The company’s first hire was also through OCE’s First Job Program, giving the

start-up much needed engineering and project support to further its preparation for the marketplace.

Armed with a solid business model, academic backing and with a small but determined staff, StormFisher then knocked on investors’ doors. The response was more than just welcoming. StormFisher formed a strategic partnership with a Boston-based private equity firm to develop a \$350 million portfolio of biogas projects, launching StormFisher to the top of the heap in North America’s biogas sector.

“There’s no question about it, without OCE StormFisher would not be here,” said Ryan Little, StormFisher’s Vice President of Business Development. “When we started approaching investors, everyone told us we didn’t have a chance making biogas fly. Now everyone’s knocking on our door, wanting in. OCE saw the potential right away and knew what to do to help us.”

Working with Canada’s farmers and agri-food industries, StormFisher will construct biogas facilities in London, Guelph and Niagara in 2009. Once at full capacity, these plants will offset the CO² equivalent of 26,000 cars per year and create ten direct full-time jobs in rural areas, as well as indirect jobs in transportation and waste handling services.

Through its work with OCE, StormFisher will establish itself as a provincial leader in turning organic waste into energy, benefiting Ontario both economically and environmentally.

