

# Environment Agency permitting decisions

## Variation

We have decided to issue the variation for Aberhall Farm Poultry Unit operated by Mr Andrew Davies, Mr William Davies and Mrs Freda Davies (trading as WRL & FM Davies and Son).

The variation number is EPR/TP3136MU/V004.

We consider in reaching that decision we have taken into account all relevant considerations and legal requirements and that the permit will ensure that the appropriate level of environmental protection is provided.

## Description of the changes introduced by the Variation

This is a Substantial Variation. The operator of Aberhall Farm Poultry Unit is proposing to burn Grade 'A' wood product as fuel for the existing 6No. site biomass boilers as well as the 1No. new biomass boiler to provide hot water heating for the poultry houses. This change will come under Section 5.1B (a)(v) of the Environmental Permitting Regulations (EPR). The operator has the renewable heat incentive (RHI) emissions certificates for this fuel as well as for virgin timber, straw and/or miscanthus (which the 6No. existing biomass boilers are currently operating with). The ash generated by the biomass boilers will be securely stored before being sent offsite as waste.

## Purpose of this document

This decision document:

- explains how the application has been determined
- provides a record of the decision-making process
- shows how all relevant factors have been taken into account
- justifies the specific conditions in the permit other than those in our generic permit template.

Unless the decision document specifies otherwise we have accepted the applicant's proposals.

## Structure of this document

- Key issues
- Annex 1 the decision checklist
- Annex 2 the consultation, web publicising responses.

## Key issues of the decision

### 1) - Biomass Boilers – fuel source

The environmental permit for this installation now includes Grade 'A' recycled waste wood as a source of fuel for the existing 6No. site biomass boilers as well as the 1No. new biomass boiler (added as part of this variation). We are satisfied that the operator will not burn waste wood originating from their own installation. All Grade 'A' recycled waste wood being burnt in the biomass boilers will come from a third party as List of Wastes code '15 01 03 – wooden packaging'. We have specified the permitted waste code in Table S2.1 of the permit. The operator is only permitted to accept this waste code for biomass fuel.

Grade 'A' clean recycled wood means visibly 'clean' recycled waste wood mainly originating from packaging waste, pallets, packing cases and process off-cuts from the manufacture of untreated wood products as defined in BSI PAS 111: 2012. We are satisfied that the waste wood is from a manufacturing source and that it will not be contaminated.

As a result of the change in fuel source the biomass boilers are changed from a directly associated activity (DAA) to a Part B scheduled activity listed in Schedule 1 of the EPR as follows:

- Section 5.1 B(a)(v) - incineration in a small waste incineration plant with an aggregate capacity of 50 kilogrammes or more per hour of wood waste with the exception of wood waste which may contain halogenated organic compounds or heavy metals as a result of treatment with wood preservatives or coatings.

There are no proposed changes to the storage of the biomass boiler fuel.

The biomass boilers (7No. in total) are now permitted to burn biomass chips or pellets comprising virgin timber, straw, miscanthus, Grade 'A' waste biomass or a combination of these.

### 2 – Biomass Boilers – emissions assessment

The applicant is adding one additional 1,047kWth (thermal input) biomass boiler to the installation in addition to the six existing biomass boilers that have an aggregated thermal input of 1,232kWth. This gives a total aggregated input for the site of 2,279kWth.

The Environment Agency has assessed the pollution risks and has concluded that air emissions from small biomass boilers are not likely to pose a significant risk to the environment or human health providing certain conditions are met. Therefore, a quantitative assessment of air emissions will not be required where:

- the fuel will be derived from virgin timber, miscanthus or straw and
- the biomass boiler appliance and installation meets the technical criteria to be eligible for the Renewable Heat Incentive and
- the aggregate boiler net rated thermal input is:
  - A. less than 0.5MWth or

- B. less than or equal to 4MWth and no individual boiler has a thermal input greater than 1MWth where
- the stack height must be a minimum of 5 metres above the ground (where there are buildings within 25 metres the stack height must be greater than 1 metre above the roof level of buildings within 25 metres) and
  - there are no sensitive receptors within 50 metres of the emission points.

This is in line with the Environment Agency's document "Air Quality and Modelling Unit C1127a - Biomass firing boilers for intensive poultry rearing".

The new 1,047kWth biomass boiler falls just outside of the requirements of criteria B above with respect to the new biomass boiler having a thermal input just over 1MWth. After further consultation with the Air Quality Modelling Assessment Unit (AQMAU) regarding the potential for an adverse effect on human health from the new biomass boiler at this installation, in this instance the 'worst case' scenario used in the modelling process means that the marginal exceedance over 1MWth is not considered significant at this installation.

No further assessment is required.

## Annex 1: decision checklist

This document should be read in conjunction with the application and supporting information and permit.

Aspect considered	Justification / Detail	Criteria met
		Yes
<b>Receipt of submission</b>		
Identifying confidential information	We have not identified any information provided as part of the application that we consider to be confidential. The decision was taken in accordance with our guidance on commercial confidentiality.	✓
<b>Consultation</b>		
Scope of consultation	The consultation requirements were identified and implemented. The decision was taken in accordance with RGN 6 High Profile Sites, our Public Participation Statement and our Working Together Agreements. For this application we consulted the following bodies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Local Authority – Planning</li> <li>➤ Local Authority – Environmental Health</li> <li>➤ Health &amp; Safety Executive</li> <li>➤ Public Health England.</li> </ul>	✓
Responses to consultation, web publicising	The web publicising, consultation responses (Annex 2) were taken into account in the decision. The decision was taken in accordance with our guidance.	✓
<b>Operator</b>		
Control of the facility	We are satisfied that the applicant (now the operator) is the person who will have control over the operation of the facility after the grant of the permit. The decision was taken in accordance with EPR RGN 1 Understanding the meaning of operator.	✓
<b>European Directives</b>		
Applicable directives	All applicable European directives have been considered in the determination of the application.	✓
<b>Environmental Risk Assessment and operating techniques</b>		
Operating techniques	We have reviewed the techniques used by the operator and compared these with the relevant guidance notes. Refer to the Key Issues section relating to the biomass boiler fuel specification. <p>We are satisfied that Grade 'A' waste wood can be used as a fuel source for the biomass boilers and have incorporated techniques into Table S1.2.</p>	✓

Aspect considered	Justification / Detail	Criteria met
		Yes
<b>The permit conditions</b>		
Raw materials	We have specified limits and controls on the use of raw materials and fuels. We have specified that only virgin timber (including wood chips and pellets), straw, miscanthus, Grade 'A' waste biomass or a combination of these can be used as a raw material for the biomass boilers at this installation.	✓
Waste types	We have specified the permitted waste types, descriptions, quantities and capacities which can be accepted at the regulated facility. We are satisfied that the operator can accept this waste. Refer to the Key Issues section for further detail.	✓
Incorporating the application	We have specified that the applicant must operate the permit in accordance with descriptions in the application, including all additional information received as part of the determination process. These descriptions are specified in the Operating Techniques table in the permit.	✓
<b>Operator Competence</b>		
Environment management system	There is no known reason to consider that the operator will not have the management systems to enable it to comply with the permit conditions. The decision was taken in accordance with RGN 5 on Operator Competence.	✓

## Annex 2: Consultation, web publicising responses

Summary of responses to consultation, web publication and the way in which we have taken these into account in the determination process.

<b>Response received from</b>
Public Health England (PHE), 23 September 2015.
<b>Brief summary of issues raised</b>
The Environmental Permit for this site should contain conditions to ensure that potential emissions of noise and odour do not impact upon public health. PHE has no significant concerns regarding risk to health of the local population from this proposed activity providing that the applicant takes all appropriate measures to prevent or control pollution in accordance with the relevant sector technical guidance or industry best practice.
<b>Summary of actions taken or show how this has been covered</b>
Conditions exist within the Environmental Permit to address the concerns raised by PHE.

The Local Authority Planning Department, Local Authority Environmental Health and the Health and Safety Executive were consulted on this application. However, consultation responses from these parties were not received.

The application was advertised externally on the GOV.UK website between 11 September 2015 and 09 October 2015 to invite any responses and comments from the general public. No responses were received.