

**From:** Johnston, Chris  
**To:** ["Michael Doran"](#);  
**Date:** 13 August 2014 12:35:00

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Michael, these are her words but I have changed some of it .....

At the Agri-Food and Bio-Sciences Institute, AFBI, scientists including Chris Johnston are conducting research into the use of willow as a dirty water biofilter, in woodchip drying and storage and in biomass heating systems.

AFBI grows its own crops to fuel boilers across multiple sites, creating energy and a platform for vital research.

Mr Johnston – who is project leader of the institute's Environment & Renewable Energy centre which was opened in 2009 - said that the implementation of biomass technology has achieved 50% savings on heating bills at AFBI Hillsborough as compared to 4 or 5 years ago..

“At the moment renewables provide about 2% of all heating requirements in Northern Ireland with a view to achieving 10% by 2020,[\[CJ1\]](#)” he said.

“There is no doubt about it that the RHI has definitely encourage uptake of biomass and it has been a very useful tool and was definitely required.

“We are seeing a lot of installations of the smaller, below 99kW boilers, and these are proving useful to many types of business.

“As well as heating their premises and bringing down their energy bills, businesses of all shapes and sizes and types are looking to reduce their carbon footprint and increase their environmentally friendly credentials.

“In our own experience we have observed that poultry farmers and mushroom farmers are employing biomass to heat their operations, with a number of commercial premises using and planning for multiple 99kW boilers.

“We are also seeing installations in facilities such as grain and

wood drying and plant nursery businesses.

“But there are still further opportunities for companies in agriculture and agri-food to get on board and install biomass heating.

“The challenge in future will be to increase uptake further in order to meet the DETI targets.

“There will also be an opportunity there for businesses involved in the supply of sustainable wood chips and pellets, because as uptake of biomass boilers increases, there will be a focus on the strength and sustainability of supply of the fuel used to run them.

The potential future demand for biomass to supply UK electricity generation requirements is enormous and biomass imports will seemingly continue to increase in being a very important part of this fuel supply chain however opportunities for the local sustainable production and consumption of biomass to provide local commercial heat requirements is a real opportunity for N. Ireland businesses, agri-food sector, farmers and landowners.

Chris Johnston | Environment and Renewable Energy Centre | AFBI | Tel: +44 (0) 28 92681540 | [chris.johnston@afbini.gov.uk](mailto:chris.johnston@afbini.gov.uk)

Sustainable Agri-Food Sciences Division

Crops, Grassland & Ecology Branch

Large Park

Hillsborough

BT26 6DR

<http://www.linkedin.com/pub/chris-johnston/4/9b6/984>

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[CJ1] The interim targets have never really featured in the industry and are seldom quoted in my experience so I wasn't keen to state 4% by 2015

**From:** Johnston, Chris  
**To:** ["Clare Weir";](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Biomass piece  
**Date:** 13 August 2014 12:58:00  
**Attachments:** [THE Renewable Heat Incentive \(Sustainable Ireland\) cj.docx](#)

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Hi Claire,

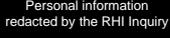
I made some slight changes and comments (I hope you don't mind) but made an error saving tracked changes. Please see attached with only some of them marked.

Can you confirm with me the final words?

Thanks again  
Regards  
Chris

Chris Johnston  
Tel:- 02892681540  
email:- [chris.johnston@afbini.gov.uk](mailto:chris.johnston@afbini.gov.uk)

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**From:** Clare Weir [mailto:weirclare@  
**Sent:** 13 August 2014 11:17  
**To:** Johnston, Chris  
**Subject:** Biomass piece

Hi Chris,

Please find attached the lead in piece for biomass feature with your comments. Feel free to make any amendments you think are necessary and correct/clarify anything you feel I have misunderstood about the scheme/sector.

Also if you have any pictures of yourself, could you send those as well. The deadline is Friday.

Many thanks again,

Clare.