

DAILY BANNER

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Boiler “not a done deal”

By Pete Macinta, *Daily Banner*

A proposed poultry litter boiler planned for the JCR plant in Linkwood is “not a done deal” and undergoing a full permitting process, according to a representative of REM Engineering, Inc. of Roswell, Ga. This and other information was presented by REM and Allen’s Family Foods during the Tuesday meeting of the Dorchester County Council.

Though a public hearing has not been scheduled on this issue, time was permitted at the end for some questions on the project.



Representatives from Allen’s Family Foods and REM Engineering, Inc., gave a presentation Tuesday evening to the Dorchester County Council regarding a proposed poultry litter boiler at the JCR plant in Linkwood. Above, David Mooney of REM gave a demonstration of how a particulate filter would prevent unwanted emissions from escaping through the boiler stack. Seated, from the back, are Councilmembers Effie Elzey (District 5), David Yockey (District 4), Glenn Bramble (District 1), and Rickey Travers (District 3). Present, but not pictured, was Councilman William Nichols (District 2). (Picture Courtesy the Daily Banner)

Council President Glenn Bramble (District 1) reminded those in attendance that the scheduled session was designed only to present information. He said he was not sure if the matter would come before the council for a final decision.

"If the county council does have the deciding factor on whether or not this would go up there, then there would be an advertised public hearing to discuss the pros and cons about this," he said.

Allen's Family Foods Corporate Environmental Manager Tom Brinson began the session. He prefaced his remarks by saying in June 2005 Governor Ehrlich and four major poultry producers of Delmarva signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to create cooperation between government and businesses to deal with environmental issues facing the area.

"One of those issues is the abundance of poultry litter," he said. He said around 561,000,000 birds were raised on Delmarva last year and produced about 700,000 tons of poultry manure.

He said part of the MOU was to come up with alternative uses for poultry manure.

Boiler Benefits

"I believe we have come up with the most environmentally friendly, clean and constructive process -- which is to convert that litter into energy. We would burn the poultry litter in a boiler to create steam for the JCR plant in Linkwood,"

He continued, "It would use approximately 14,000 ton a year of poultry manure."

He said this would not only remove that amount of poultry manure from farmland, but replace about 12 percent of the fossil fuel used at the facility, and generate about 12 percent of the steam that is used at JCR.

Mr. Brinson said, "Fossil fuel does not burn as clean as poultry manure."

He said the Linkwood plant has around 60 employees, and the boiler would help create "some new technical type jobs for the area."

The litter plant itself would comprise about 3,000 square feet.

The operation would add about two trucks a day to the 70 to 75 that currently visit JCR. Trucks would be covered going in and cleaned after disposal of waste.

He said it was a win for the environment since it removed some manure from the ground and did not use dirty fuel.

Substance removal

David Mooney of REM spoke next, saying that REM had 50 years of combustion experience.

He referred to the boiler as a small project. It would be a 300 HP boiler producing 15 million BTU per hour and 10,000 lbs of steam per hour.

The boiler house would be 1,200 square feet and there would be 3,600 square feet of total disturbed area.

He said the usage of 14,000 tons of waste replaces "merely 2 million pounds of nitrogen and phosphorus from flowing into the watershed."

Mr. Mooney said, "Because we are gasifying rather than direct combustion, we are actually lowering the nitrous oxides and sulfur oxides bellowing out of the stack by 145,000 pounds per year."

He said greenhouse gases would be reduced annually by 26 million pounds, "equivalent to 10,000 cars on the roadway."

He said nitrous and sulfur oxides would be cleaned by the naturally occurring ammonia and calcium within the waste respectively.

While some hydrochloric acid would be cleaned by the alkali within the waste, the rest, along with other untreated emissions, is to be captured by a particulate fabric filter which has a pore size of less than 2 microns.

The smoke would be captured in the filter cache, then collected in a bag which would be sealed by compressed air. The bag would then be sent to a hopper and removed from the plant.

Fertilizer use

Mr. Mooney said there was an agreement with Allen's to "remove all ash from this plant from the state of Maryland for three years."

He said the ash contained 20 percent phosphorus, 13 to 14 percent potassium, around 14 percent calcium. It would also contain magnesium.

He said the ash would make good fertilizer for areas not already over fertilized. It would be sent to fertilizer companies to be mixed with nitrogen.

He also said the 14,000 tons of litter gasified replaces 800,000 of fuel, roughly the same as heating 2,500 homes in winter.

Regarding odor, he said the ash and emissions from the stack would be odorless.

Raw material would enter the building in covered trucks. The unloading area would have negative pressure, causing outside air to flow into that area of the building.

He said a permit from the Maryland Department of Environment is being sought.

Citizen concerns

At the end of the presentation, Councilman Bramble said he thought it was a good idea if it met all of the environmental requirements.

About the presentation, Jim Dolan said, "This tells you everything that is good about it, but nothing that is bad about it, and we all know that everything has two sides."

Among other issues, he raised concerns about the possible emission of arsenic, similar to what FiberWatt in the United Kingdom faced.

Mr. Mooney said FiberWatt did not use the same filtration system as REM, and the REM boiler stack would not emit arsenic.

Mr. Dolan said, "If this is a viable source of energy, then great. But if it isn't, you have an obligation to the people of this county to find out before you say yes or no, or make an endorsement like you just did Glenn [Councilman Bramble]."

He continued, "I say that burning chicken manure right now, by all of the evidence presented throughout the world, is one of the worst possible things that can happen in Dorchester County."

After Mr. Dolan spoke, Councilman Bramble reminded him and others present that he said he would be in favor of the boiler only if it passes all environmental requirements.

Glen Payne was concerned about odor and also said Delaware, where Allen's has locations, bans such waste plants.

Rick Price asked if any Allen's plant had a problem with pollution.

Allen's Vice President of Operations Michael Pilcher basically said he did not know of anyone who has been able to run a plant perfectly.

More information about REM Engineering Inc. may be had by visiting on the Internet www.remenergy.com.