



Canadian Bioenergy Association
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Canada joins new World Bioenergy Association

CANBIO's Annual Conference and Trade Show, which wrapped up in Ottawa last week, testified to rapid industry momentum in 2008.

"What a difference a year makes," Ontario Power Generation (OPG) Program Manager for the Northwest and CANBIO Director, Jane Todd, told the 200-strong crowd. The province's major power utility is sprinting to convert its existing coal-fired power plants to cogeneration facilities. From just one biomass-testing program at its Nanticoke plant last year, OPG is now in the throes of an "aggressive testing program in all of our plants," said Todd.

Large co-generation isn't the only area making big strides this year. Communities in Quebec are working co-operatively to develop bioenergy to boost a slowing forest economy. Carl-Éric Guertin, marketing director of the Quebec Wood Energy Board, and CANBIO Director, told delegates that while government is working to remove barriers to biomass for energy, the real crusaders in Quebec can be found at the local level. The Bas-Saint-Laurent region alone plans to install ten central heating projects by 2010.

But the President of the World Bioenergy Association, Kent Nyström's keynote address clearly showed Canada has a long way to go before bioenergy becomes a critical part of the country's energy system. Nyström said the turning point for his country, Sweden, was the implementation of a national carbon tax. Citizens were given an income tax break in return for paying a tax on carbon and as a result public acceptance was high, he said.

"One thing is clear, Canada needs to put a value on carbon now," said CANBIO President Doug Bradley, summing up a panel discussion on Canada's renewable energy industry.

The conference stayed true to its theme of "Bioenergy in Action." Twenty-five tradeshow exhibitors from Ireland, Finland, Sweden, the US and Canada including the latest technologies and equipment. This year's new business-to-business session, where interested delegates signed up for one-to-one meetings with trade show companies, were a major hit with 57 tête-à-tête's taking place.

A study tour to Abitibi-Bowater's co-generation plant in Hull, Quebec, a biomass harvesting and processing operation, Camionnage Normand Sans-Cartier, and Plasco's waste-to-energy demonstration plant in Ottawa was also extremely popular.

CANBIO organizers were proud of the CANBIO Board is already discussing plans for next year's event, which it hopes to hold in Edmonton next Autumn.

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