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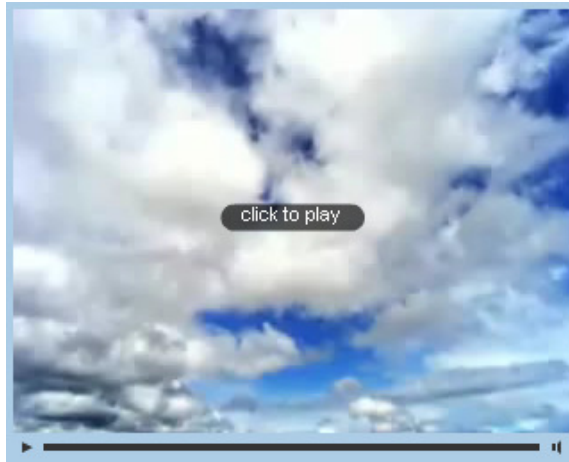
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Energy from Table Scraps

2008-04-21

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[Paul Pfothenauer:] Hundreds of people came to UC Davis to witness the latest technology for turning food scraps into clean, renewable energy.

[Ruihong Zhang:] The energy is in a form of two gases including hydrogen gas and methane gas.

[Paul Pfothenauer:] On this day, tons of leftovers from the Bay Area's top restaurants were placed on this conveyor belt. When the material fills these tanks, the gas production process begins. Professor Zhang's research team has developed a system that processes a wider variety of wastes -- both solid and liquid -- including food scraps, yard trimmings, animal manure and rice straw. When the five to 10 day process is completed, the system can generate enough electricity to power about 80 homes a day.

[Ruihong Zhang:] This process is faster, more efficient and provides more energy as output, compared with existing technologies.

[Paul Pfothenauer:] This technology is expected to make a substantial dent in both landfills and the use of oil and coal for fuels and electricity. Onsite Power Systems partnered with UC Davis to help refine the technology and prepare it for transfer to the commercial market.

[Dave Konwinski:] It gives us much more design flexibility to go directly to where the waste stream is created and put the energy back into the community the best way that it can be used whether its fuel, energy or a combination.

[Paul Pfothenauer:] Over the long-term the challenge is to produce enough fuel -- coming out of these tanks -- in large enough volumes to make this economically feasible for cities, businesses and farms. Reporting from UC Davis, I'm Paul Pfothenauer.

For more information, go to: <http://frontiers.ucdavis.edu/9a.html>

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