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Farmers See Future in Algae

On January 15, 2009, Central Ohio's Agriculture, Business, and the Agriculture Support Community braved the weather and came together for a productive day of learning and discussion.



David Coho, AlgaeVS's Vice President of Sales, discussed and demonstrated some of the sustainable (crop based) plastic products that AlgaeVS has made over the last couple of years. Among the bio-based packaging shown were the pouches for Al Gore's "An Inconvenient Truth" and Leonardo DiCaprio's "The Eleventh Hour". Also shown were the PLA Tradeshow Badge Holders that AlgaeVS now supplies all over the world and a Soybean/Petroleum blended R&D Binder that AlgaeVS has been working on.

Norma McDonald from Phase 3 Renewables was the second presenter and updated the audience on several "waste-to-energy" and "closed-looped" opportunities revolving around anaerobic digesters. Norma explained that the "digestate" or the brown water that comes off these units is high in the nutrients that algae need to grow and flourish. Therefore, future plans are in the works to possibly co-locate the AlgaeVenture RAF (Rapid Algae Farming) system with these anaerobic digesters at dairy farms, swine operations, poultry operations etc.

Ross Youngs, as the final presenter of the day, demonstrated that algae farming makes sense in the Ohio Valley and the Midwest in hybrid covered ponds. The algae and the resulting lipids can be used to make fuels and plastics and a host of other products. Mr. Youngs showed how the old "Rust Belt" could become the new "Green Gold Belt" because algae can be a "Platform Industry" as it involves technologies in growing, harvesting, dewatering, extraction, and refining. Hundreds of new businesses and jobs could be created in Ohio in the fairly near term.

The meeting ended with a tour of AlgaeVS's manufacturing facility and a tour of the AlgaeVenture System's growth cells and buildings.

The farmers that were present asked some fantastic and poignant questions. All departed with a level of excitement to move these technologies to the next level. Mike Vallery, a leading agriculture voice from Madison County said "I am impressed with AlgaeVS's leadership role they have taken in regards to algae and hope that they and their collaborators bring this affordably to the farmers as soon as possible."

Representation from the Ohio Farm Bureau, Ohio BioProducts Innovation Center, The Center for Innovative Food Technology, Edison Materials Technology Education Center, and local businesses found the tour to be interesting and wanting to play a part to team and collaborate in making this technology successful in Ohio. Ohio currently stands at a doorway where it can enter into new industries with the leverage of its largest industries - agriculture, fuels, and polymers. In order to achieve this, we have to be prepared to walk through together as a State of progressive thinkers and doers.