

## Press release

### **Pathogenic germs like EHEC are almost completely destroyed in biogas plants**

**Media throughout Europe multiplied a speculations from Germany that a biogas plant was reason for the outbreak of the EHEC epidemic with diarrhea and kidney failure, shocking the public without necessity. These messages completely contradict year long professional hygiene measurements proving that E.coli, the family of EHEC, are drastically reduced in biogas digesters.**

The bacteria EHEC is neither created nor cross-bred in biogas plants. They can be found everywhere in digestion systems of cows and other ruminants. If ever the cross-bred happened, it did so in the host, the cow. Source for the outbreak could be contaminated feed imported from regions in the world with a high EHEC density like in a few Asian countries, or from infections during transport of the animals.

At average digestion temperatures in agricultural digesters of 37 to 42 degree C, bacteria like EHEC are reduced by up to 99%. This happens during the digestion process that creates hostile conditions for the growth of the pathogenic bacteria. In biogas plants with higher digestion temperatures (ca. 55 degree C) the hygienic quality of digestate is comparable to bathing water. There is no question of multiplication of the pathogenic bacteria during the biogas formation, there is simply no scientific evidence for that. The digested manure is in contrary far more sanitized than the raw slurry.

With the digestion of the slurry, an easily dosable, high value fertilizer is produced with a high hygienic quality. As a result, the anaerobic treatment of manure in cases of epidemics should be mandatory to reduce gut infections. Apart from those hygienic considerations, it is hard to believe that a farmer used digestate (fermentation residue) on almost mature vegetables at all because the plant does not require addition of ammonia anymore at this stage of growth.

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