

Short Rotation Woody Crops (SRC) plantations for local supply chains and heat use

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National Seminar in the Region of Oberlausitz

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Editor: Dr. Christian Epp, Biomassehof Achenal GmbH & Co.KG, Germany

Contact: Biomassehof Achenal GmbH & Co.KG
Wolfgang Wimmer
Email: w.wimmer@biomassehof-achental.de
Tel: +49 (0) 8641 / 69 41 43 0
Eichelreuth 20
83224 Grassau, Deutschland
www.biomassehof-achental.de

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1 Introduction

In the National Seminar (Task 6.5) the SRC findings should be presented to stakeholders in another German region in order to stimulate the replication and implementation of the IEE action there. After intense strategic debate BAT decided to hold the National Seminar in the region of Oberlausitz in the East of Germany. Several prerequisites for successful SRC replication can be found there:

- With a large share of waste land (particularly from brown coal mining) Oberlausitz has significant potential for ecological benefits from SRC Plantations
- The vast sizes of agricultural units in Eastern Germany give space to SRC plantations on fringe areas
- The regional biomass producer Bioenergie Ostsachsen (BOS) is a well known partner and has proven its capacity to mobilise successfully bio-energy actions in Oberlausitz

After all experiences in SRC Plus project work it became clear that a fruitful initiation of SRC plantations is possible if representations from the following stakeholder groups can be brought to the table:

- 1) Owners of agricultural and forestry land
- 2) Technology providers
- 3) Biomass traders.

Particularly the first group is rather difficult to mobilise in Eastern Germany. For this reason it was decided to include a practical demonstration of SRC harvesting into the seminar programme. Such a hand- on experience increases the interest for farming and forestry people significantly.

Based on these strategic ideas the SRC National Seminar was prepared and implemented in Berthelsdorf, Oberlausitz on Thursday, 9 February 2017.

2 Framework conditions in the region of Oberlausitz

2.1 Geographic framework condition

The region of Oberlausitz comprises of the administrative areas of Görlitz and Bautzen and has the size of 450.000 hectare. The region faces harsh economic problems with an unemployment rate above 22% and young people going abroad. Agriculture is a main source of income with 46% of surface land being agricultural land and 35% being forestry. Oberlausitz is among the regions with the highest percentage of forests in Germany. Oberlausitz is very close to Poland and Czech Republic as it can be seen in the following figure:



Figure 1 Geographic map of Oberlausitz in Easter Germany

2.2 Bioenergie Ostsachsen (BOS) as a cluster partner

Bioenergie Ostsachsen (BOS) is a private company which strives for regional development through the promotion of bio-energy in the region. BOS produces wood-chips and chip log on the premises of a local biogas plant. The produced goods are sold in the region or transported to the municipality of Dresden.

Being active for already seven years BOS has created a strong network of bio-energy stakeholders in the region and e.g. was active member in the network “cluster wood” which was funded by the Government of Saxony.

With today 8 employees and a turn-over of more than 10.000 m³ of wood-chips BOS is the ideal partner and co-organiser for the SRC Plus National seminar.



Figure 2 Picture of the premises of BOS in Oberlausitz

2.3 Potential for SRC in Oberlausitz

Oberlausitz and in an even higher degree the neighbouring Polish areas have a significant amount of waste land which could be transferred into SRC Plantation. It is important to be aware that many of these sites have poor soil qualities and a limited access to water.

SRC	Region	Annual yield per year and hectare	Available land in hectare	Total Potential in Atrotonnen p.a.
Willows	Wasteland in Oberlausitz	4	5.000	20.000
Willows	Wasteland in Poland	4	5.000	20.000
Willows	SRC on agricultural sites in Oberlausitz	8	1.000	8.000
Willows	SRC on agricultural sites in Poland	8	5.000	40.000
Total				88.000

Today, only 300 Hectare of SRC can be found in Oberlausitz. The reason for this huge unexploited potential has been highlighted on the National Seminar and strategies have been formulated on how to overcome these barriers.

3 National Seminar

3.1 Strategic focus and mobilisation

As mentioned before the National Seminar strived to mobilise regional representatives of the following three target groups.

- 1) Owners of agricultural and forestry land
- 2) Technology providers
- 3) Biomass traders.

With BOS as co- organiser a significant trader of biomass already was mobilised. As technology provider it was possible to win Ms. Susann Skalda of Biomass Schraden e.V. as lecturer who rents out SRC harvesting machinery. Moreover, Klaas industries followed the invitation to do a demonstration harvesting with a Niew Holland machinery on the nearby SRC plantation.

The representatives of farming and forestry units have been mobilised by Mr. Helmfried Dienel who is a well- known farmer in the region and hosted the National Seminar in his own premises in Berthelsdorf. The mobilisation work of Mr. Helmfried Dienel for the seminar in his networks was supported significantly by the perspective not only to follow theoretical presentations but to watch real machinery harvesting a SRC plantation on- site.

3.2 Invitation list and participation

Altogether 80 representatives have been invited from agriculture, forestry, science, municipalities, environmental organisations and the press. A sample of the invitation letter can be found in Annex I.

Altogether 45 individuals participated in the seminar. The complete participation list can be found in Annex II.



Figure 3 Welcome of the participants by Mr. Helmfried Dienel

3.3 Programme of National Seminar

After some smaller modifications, the programme on the National Seminar was the following:

9:00:	Welcome through the host Mr. Helmfried Dienel
9:15:	Overview on previous and on-going SRC activities in Oberlausitz by Helmfried Dienel, farmer from Oberlausitz
9:45:	Quality requirements of wood- chips from SRC for energy supply by André Birner, BOS
10:00:	Survey on the experiences of cultivation and harvesting of environmental SRCs with the EU project SRC Plus by Dr. Christian Epp
10:30:	Survey on current harvesting technologies by Susann Skalda, Biomasse Schraden e.V.
10:45	Inter mediate wrap- up of results and discussion
11:30	Transfer to the SRC plantations of Helmfried Dienel in Berthelsdorf
12:00	Demonstration of SRC Plus harvesting through Klaas lim.
12:30	Visit of the wood- chips drying facilities in the biogas plant of Berthelsdorf
13:00	Lunch and informal exchange of views
14:00	End of National Seminar

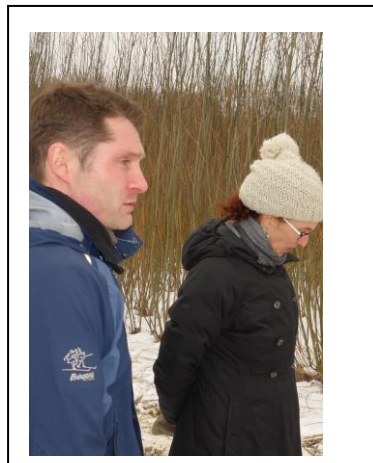


Figure 4 The lecturers André Birner and Susann Skalda at the SRC site

4 Results

Through the strong presence of practical people from agriculture and forestry the presentations and discussion took place on a remarkable high level. Main findings have been:

- EU Agricultural policy should give SRC land the factor 1 and not 0.3 for GAP.
- A big barrier against SRC plantation is the lack of experiences which cause significant failures in the pilot projects in Saxony so far.
- It is very important that harvesting machinery is available in the region.
- It is of high importance to grow SRC on lease land since the leasing rhythm with normally 7 years is insufficient for effective plantation work.

- + Potential for SRC should be on smaller agricultural sites which are in significant distance to the farming place.
- + SRC allows to better balance the yearly working load with having activity peaks in January and February
- + The combination of SRC with water protection or landscape improvement was seen as rather promising approach (SRC Plus Strategy).
- + SRC should only make sense if direct consumption of the produced biomass is guaranteed in the region itself.
- + In midterm perspective wood-chips from SRC Plus must have sufficient quality to supply middle sized heating stations (so called “premium wood chips”).



Figure 5 Discussing the results of the SRC Plus

Further results can be found in the Seminar Presentation:

Presentation of Helmfried Dienel in Appendix IV

Presentation of André Birner in Appendix V

Presentation of Christian Epp in Appendix VI