



**7th January 2008**

## **News Release**

### **Public Consultation Process Underway for Major Green Energy Project**

Three of Northern Ireland's leading agri-food companies have commenced a public consultation process prior to submitting a planning application for the construction of a £100 million biomass power plant on the Ballyvannon Road near Glenavy, County Antrim.

Background information on the project is being sent to residents and businesses in the Glenavy area. The government has already indicated its support in principle for the proposal, which could deliver up to a third of Northern Ireland's target for despatchable\* green energy, and address a major environmental challenge facing the farming industry.

O'Kane Poultry Ltd, Moy Park Ltd, and Glenfarm Holdings Ltd have joined forces to create Rose Energy, a company which proposes to construct a 30 megawatt\*\* power generating plant, fuelled mainly by poultry bedding. As well as employing 30 people at the plant, the project would also play a vital role in safeguarding over 7,000 existing jobs in the poultry and agri-food sector. Similar plants have been built in Great Britain, providing a commercial reference for the proposed facility.

The company was formed in response to Northern Ireland's obligation to generate 12% of its electricity from indigenous renewable sources by 2012. The initiative is also the outcome of an Invest NI-supported feasibility study which explored alternatives for dealing with poultry bedding. An EU Directive which came into force in January 2007 restricts the amount of fertiliser which farmers can spread on their land. The proposal to use poultry bedding as a fuel source will enable Northern Ireland to comply with this directive by removing a huge amount of material which previously would have been destined for land-spread. The generating plant will also utilise the main by-product of Glenfarm's subsidiary company, Ulster Farm By Products Ltd, which renders by-products from the livestock industry into Meat & Bone Meal (MBM). The combined

output of poultry bedding and MBM from the three companies will total around 250,000 tonnes of fuel material per year.

Rose Energy director, Mike Alcorn said, "This is an exciting project for Northern Ireland, using proven technology to deliver huge benefits to the province on two key fronts – improving the environment and generating renewable energy. The plant will provide an opportunity to use two valuable biomass fuel sources locally, which have for several years been used as fuel for similar plants in GB. Rose Energy represents a huge financial commitment, the majority of which is being privately funded. The relevant government departments are aware of our proposals and have indicated their support in principle. We are working closely with them to secure the remaining funding required to realise this project."

Depending on the success of their planning application, the directors hope the new state-of-the-art facility will be operational by late 2010/early 2011. Further information on the project can be found at [www.roseenergy.co.uk](http://www.roseenergy.co.uk).

#### **Ends**

For further information contact Peter Morrow or Michelle Rice at Morrow Communications Tel: 028 9039 3837 or email [m.rice@morrowcommunications.com](mailto:m.rice@morrowcommunications.com)

#### **Notes to Editor:**

\* Despatchable green energy means that the fuel source and the electricity produced can be maintained and guaranteed – unlike wind and solar power which are dependent on weather conditions.

\*\* This is the equivalent of powering a town greater than the size of Ballymena.

#### **Shareholder company background:**

· **Moy Park Ltd** is Northern Ireland's largest food processing company and one of Europe's leading poultry companies. The company offers a range of chicken products to retail and foodservice customers across Europe. Operations are based in Northern Ireland, England, France and Holland employing more than 7,000 people with a turnover of £700m. Moy Park is part of the Chicago-based OSI Group LLC. The company has been supplying poultry bedding for use as a biofuel to power stations in the UK for a number of years, and aims to make similar energy generation a reality in Northern Ireland.

- Founded in 1932 by the late W.P. O'Kane, **O'Kane Poultry Ltd** is a family-owned business. O'Kane's is a vertically integrated organisation operating its own feed mill, two hatcheries, and two processing plants. With over 500 contract farmers rearing birds, O'Kane's employs over 1200 people throughout the province and supplies branded and own-label poultry meat products to both the retail and food service sectors throughout the UK and Ireland.
- Formed by the local farming community in the 1950s, **Glenfarm Holdings Ltd** is now one of Northern Ireland's leading agricultural cooperatives, employing 70 staff with over 4000 farmer shareholders. Originally established to dispose of fallen farm animals in a safe and cost effective way, the organisation has extended its expertise and service to the full food chain - from the farm through to abattoirs, food-processing companies and retail stores. A core process in making food waste safe, rendering is now carried out on at an industrial scale under stringent environmental controls at the co-operative's factory premises in County Antrim.

**Poultry bedding**, also known as poultry litter, is a mixture of poultry droppings and bedding material such as sawdust, wood shavings, straw or rice hulls. It is a nutrient-rich material, particularly high in nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. Traditionally farmers have used it as a fertiliser, however the practice of spreading it on farmland has been limited and regulated due to concerns about water pollution. The EU Nitrates Directive has forced the farming community to look for different methods of disposal for poultry bedding.

**Meat and bone meal**, commonly known as **MBM**, is the protein by-product of the rendering process. The process involves grinding, cooking & pressure sterilising discarded farm animal products to render them safe in the interests of animal and public health. It is a powdery material which looks similar to soil. Currently most of Northern Ireland's MBM is exported for use in green energy plants in Great Britain.

**The EU Nitrates Directive** is concerned with the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources. Further information is available at [www.dardni.gov.uk](http://www.dardni.gov.uk)

Information on the government's **green energy targets** is based on figures available from the Strategic Energy framework, June 2004.... [www.energydetini.gov.uk](http://www.energydetini.gov.uk) (publications section 2004)