



CALU Gwlad – November 2007

Old fuels and new fashions

When people think about biomass for energy, they often forget the original (and arguably still the best) fuel grown in Wales: wood. Properly seasoned wood, from either hard- or softwood species, is an excellent fuel. And using wood to produce heat is one of the most effective ways to obtain the energy from it – rather than trying to convert it into electricity or a liquid biofuel. Firewood is an ideal use for thinnings and cleanings when bringing old farm woodlands back into management.

Freshly cut wood contains a lot of water – probably half of the weight will be water. But once wood has been seasoned for a year or so, it will dry out to about 20% moisture. In energy terms, that means on a weight for weight basis, seasoned wood has around 75% more energy than green wood. So it is definitely worth planning ahead and seasoning your wood before burning.

In these days of carbon consciousness, it is worth bearing in mind that using locally grown wood to displace fossil fuels greatly reduces carbon emissions.

Since CALU's energy booklets (see Gwlad July 2007) were published earlier this year, issues of energy and carbon management have become more and more prominent. Auditing energy use on the farm is one tool in the armoury to reduce carbon outputs.

In response to demand, CALU has organised two on-farm energy audit open days. At these events, CALU's energy advisers will go through the energy audit process using real data from the host farms. The first event is (was) on the 21st November at Pentrewyn farm, Carmarthen, and the second is being organised at Coleg Llysfasi, in north Wales for the 16th January. For further information on these two events and to book your place please contact CALU on 01248 680450 or email calu@bangor.ac.uk.

For more information on wood as a fuel, visit www.woodfuelwales.org.uk. CALU's leaflet on seasoning firewood can be downloaded from the website – www.calu.bangor.ac.uk

WINTER FAIR

CALU will be focusing on energy issues at this year's Winter Fair. Visitors to the stand will be able to discuss energy issues – both production and management - with CALU staff. A range of fuel pellets supplied by CALU partner, Coed Cymru, will be on display. There will also be a biomass boiler on the stand, supplied by John Amos Ltd. Copies of both of CALU's energy booklets will be available on the day or they can be downloaded from the CALU website www.calu.bangor.ac.uk