



Diversifying farm income: Providing advice and training for new energy solutions

This session showcases how alternative and renewable energy solutions can create new income opportunities for farmers. It will highlight advisory and training approaches that support farmers in adopting agrivoltaics, developing small-scale biomass systems, and integrating climate-smart energy models into their businesses. Together, these insights demonstrate how AKIS actors can empower farmers to turn energy into a reliable additional revenue stream.

Agenda

10:00H-10:15H

Welcome and Introduction to the event and the modernAKIS project

Julia Eberharter, Austrian Chamber of Agriculture, Austria (Moderation)
 Stephanie Bürger, Austrian Rural Educational Institute, Austria

10:15H-10:30H

Farming with Power: Structuring energy solutions for farmers

Fien Van Esch, Energy Consultant at Boerenbond, Belgium

10:30H-10:45H

Agricultural Energy Advice in Austria – Focus on Comprehensive Energy Concepts and Energy Communities

Klaus Engelmann, Advisor on energy, climate and bioresources at Styrian Chamber of Agriculture, Austria

10:45H-11:00H

Turning manure into value: How farmers can engage with biogas systems in Finland

Anu Tiikkainen, Agricultural economist and project manager at Savonia UAS, Finland

11:00H-11:30H

Q&A Session

Key Learnings

- Renewable Energy provides additional income for farmers
- On-farm energy can be developed as a business opportunity
- Advisors help farmers in designing viable energy concepts
- AKIS actors support farmers engage into energy communities and cooperate within local energy systems

Who should join?

- Advisors, innovation support services, and other providers of specialized services
- Networks (CAP network or other)
- Farmers, foresters and their organisations
- Managing authorities and Public authorities
- Rural enterprises



Meet the Speakers



Fien Van Esch

**Energy Consultant at
Boerenbond, Belgium**

Fien is an Energy Consultant at Boerenbond since September 2025, where she advises farmers on a wide range of energy-related challenges, including technology selection, system sizing, and energy efficiency. Her work focuses on helping farmers make informed, future-proof energy decisions, while identifying cost-saving opportunities and new revenue streams. She is also actively involved in projects related to energy communities and agrivoltaics.



Klaus Engelmann

**Advisor on energy, climate, and
bioresources at Styrian Chamber of
Agriculture, Austria**

Klaus Engelmann, MSc - Since 2015, he works as an advisor on energy, climate, and bioresources at the Styrian Chamber of Agriculture, focusing on biomass, wood-fired heating, biomass district heating and rural energy communities. He is the author of *Energy from Wood in Agriculture and Forestry*. He also manages his own agricultural and forestry farm. His academic background is in environmental systems science, with a focus on business administration, sustainability management and energy.



Anu Tiikkainen

**Agricultural economist and
project manager at Savonia UAS,
Finland**

Anu Tiikkainen is an agricultural economist and project manager at Savonia UAS, working on biogas and nutrient recycling projects. She is also a PhD researcher at University of Helsinki, focusing on farm-level impacts of manure-based biogas systems. Her background is in dairy farming and advisory services,



Presentations

Farming with Power: Structuring energy solutions for farmers

This session explores how to approach energy-related challenges on farms in a structured and practical way, showing how advisors can guide farmers from initial questions to concrete, workable solutions and often identify quick wins early in the process. It takes a closer look at relevant renewable energy options for the agricultural context, such as solar panels (or agrivoltaics), batteries, small-scale biomass systems and other on-farm energy solutions, with a strong emphasis on viable and realistic business models. The presentation also highlights the importance of staying closely connected to market developments through strong relationships with installers and other key stakeholders. In addition, it underlines the value of co-creation and knowledge exchange by bringing together farmers who have already implemented solutions with those who are considering adoption.

Agricultural Energy Advice in Austria – Focus on Comprehensive Energy Concepts and Energy Communities

This presentation provides an overview of agricultural energy advisory services in Austria, with a particular focus on the activities of the Chamber of Agriculture in Styria and its expert advisory team. It outlines the advisory approach to improving on-farm energy efficiency, self-sufficiency and energy independence based on practical measures. A focus is placed on comprehensive farm energy concepts that support strategic investment decisions and long-term energy planning. In addition, the presentation explains the principles of rural energy communities, their operational models, and the potential benefits for farms.

Turning manure into value: How farmers can engage with biogas systems in Finland

Biogas systems are increasingly seen as a way to improve farm profitability and resource efficiency in Finland. While energy production is often emphasised, less visible benefits related to manure management, labour efficiency and nutrient value can significantly affect farm operations.

This presentation explores different pathways for farmers to engage in biogas systems, including on-farm, cooperative and centralised solutions, and how these differ in terms of risk, required knowledge and expected benefits. It also shows how advisory services, applied research and farmer networks support farmers in practice. In Finland, these connections are often quite direct and practical, helping to turn knowledge into action