

## Biogas and organic farming

Organic farmers use biogas technologies to support their farm practices. Processing of agricultural or horticultural waste in an anaerobic digester provides fertiliser and biogas for utilisation on the farm.

New Zealand organic dairy consumption mirrors the global trend. Domestic organic milk sales reportedly rose by 50% in 2014, according to the recently released NZ Organic Market Report. Nearly all the growth in domestic milk sales in 2015 came from organic milk (<http://www.oanz.org/publications/reports.html> )

To meet the demand, organic milk processing needs to be more widely accessible in all regions, including the South Island. As a result there is an increased interest from farmers in converting to organics.

Organic dairying not only brings in a decent income for farmers, it also results in cleaner rivers and healthier people.

Organic dairy farms have a lower environmental footprint than conventional farms, with improved soils and reduced nitrate leaching, resulting in cleaner waterways. Organic farms have lower greenhouse gas emissions and greater carbon capture in the soil. They have lower stocking rates, but receive a premium for a high-value, healthy product.

Biogas can be a renewable substitute for natural gas and is suitable for use in homes and businesses for cooking, heating purposes and electricity generation and of course transport (it can be used directly in diesel engines).

It has many benefits including being carbon neutral and since it can be produced locally, create jobs and improve energy security.



*(image: Refuelling with biogas, Invermay)*

The fertiliser produced by anaerobic digestion is high quality and pathogen free – ideal for organic farming.