



Wensleydale cheese | Photo source Pixabay

TURNING CHEESE WASTE INTO RENEWABLE ENERGY

 FOOD & DRINK

A biogas company and a creamery are teaming up to recycle food waste for use as feedstock

Iona Capital's Leeming bioenergy plant and Wensleydale Creamery, makers of world-famous Wensleydale cheese, have teamed up to turn cheese waste into biogas. The Leeming plant currently operates using residue from ice cream production, and supplies biogas to around 4,000 homes in North Yorkshire.

The Wensleydale Creamery produces around 4,000 tonnes of cheese each year. Waste product from this includes whey, which is the liquid that is left over after the milk has been curdled and strained. Leeming can use the whey as feedstock for the anaerobic bacteria that produce biogas.

The plant estimates that the cheese waste will help produce around one million cubic meters of green gas, enough to heat 800 homes per year. Organic material left over after anaerobic digestion can be used as fertiliser on neighbouring farmland.

"This shows the real impact of the circular economy and the part intelligent investment can play in reducing our carbon emissions," Mike Dunn, Iona's co-founder, told [The Guardian](#).

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Takeaway:

This process not only reduces waste, but also shrinks the carbon footprint of energy production, and helps develop sustainable farming and manufacturing practices. When left in landfills, food waste rots and produces methane gas, a potent greenhouse gas. Methane is similar to biogas, but when it is produced in landfills, the methane is released into the atmosphere and contributes to global warming. If the food waste is instead converted to biogas, it can then be injected directly into the local gas grid and used as energy, displacing fossil fuels used for heating or electricity generation. Springwise has spotted many innovative ways to reduce food waste, from turning it into [biodegradable dyes](#) to repurposing it as an [edible food preservative](#).