

Agricultural Waste and the Exemptions Review

T24 Anaerobic digestion at premises used for agriculture and burning of resultant biogas

What exemption does it replace?

Paragraph 12

What is the purpose of this exemption?

To allow farmers to anaerobically digest manures, slurries and vegetation on their farms to produce digestate that can be used as a fertiliser or soil conditioner. This reduces the need to use inorganic fertilisers.

The anaerobic digestion (AD) process also produces biogas, which can be burnt to generate energy, either for use on the farm or for export to the national grid.

What types of activity can I do?

You can:

- anaerobically digest manure and plant tissue waste in a dedicated AD plant to produce a digestate.
- burn the biogas produced by the AD process to produce energy to provide power on your farm or export to the national grid.
- sort, screen, cut, shred, pulverise and chip the waste to aid the AD process.

The types of waste you can use under this exemption are listed in the [table](#) at the end of this guidance.

Where can I carry out this activity?

At any farm you have registered under this exemption.

What can't I do?

You can't:

- dispose of the biogas by flaring or venting it to the atmosphere.
- compost the manure and plant tissue. If you want to do this you should register exemption T23.
- spread the resulting digestate under this exemption.

What are the key limits?

- The waste must remain in the AD plant for a minimum of 28 days.
- You can store or treat up to 1,250 cubic metres of waste at any one time.

This storage limit does not include on-farm manure and slurry pits used to store waste prior to treatment.

If you import manure and slurry from other farms and store it before it is fed into your AD plant, the storage of this waste is included within the 1,250 cubic metre limit.

When manure and slurry is mixed with plant tissue waste the 1250 cubic metre limit will include the storage of plant tissue waste, the digester and the storage of the resulting digestate.

Summary table - what is included in the 1,250 cubic metre limit

Type of feedstock	Storage of feedstock	Digester	Storage of digestate
Manure & Slurry from your farm only			
Imported Manures and slurries			
Manure and Slurry from your own farm plus crops grown for AD plant.			
Manure and slurry from your own farm and plant waste.			

The green shading indicates what is included the 1,250 cubic metre limit.

What are the key conditions?

- the biogas produced by the AD process must be collected and then burnt to produce energy.
- the biogas burner on the AD plant must have a net rated thermal input of less than 0.4 MW.
- if there is more than one burner associated with the AD plant the burners together must have a combined net rated thermal input of less than 0.4 MW.

What else do I need to know?

Anaerobic digestion is different from composting. The AD process involves decomposing wastes in an atmosphere with no oxygen and it requires a purpose-built plant.

Once the AD process is completed it produces a digestate. **Digestate** is typically a pumpable material that can be further separated into a fibre and a liquor. It can be used on farms as fertilisers and soil conditioners.

The **net rated thermal input** is the maximum rate at which fuel can be burned continuously in an appliance. The rate is calculated by multiplying the calorific values of the waste by the maximum rated input of the appliance. This information should be available from the manufacturers plate on the appliance or from the manufacturer.

agricultural waste helpline

0845 603 3113

incident hotline

0800 80 70 60

floodline

0845 988 1188

www.environment-agency.gov.uk/agriculturalwaste

Plant tissue waste includes all materials of plant origin such as trees, shrubbery, branches with or without foliage, leaves or foliage wood and vegetation

If you are only processing manure and slurry in your AD plant, you do not need to register an exemption to apply the resulting digestate to land. However, you must still register this T24 exemption to carry out the AD process. Further details on AD and how we regulate it can be found on [our website](#).

See our website for more information about how we apply waste regulatory controls to the anaerobic digestion of agricultural manure and slurry, and to the use of the digestate as a fertiliser: http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/static/documents/AD_of_Agr_MS_v2_-_Final.pdf

What waste types can I treat under this exemption?

List of wastes codes	Waste types
020103, 020107, 170506,200201	Plant tissue waste
020106	Horse and farmyard manure, slurry only

Related exemptions

If you are processing vegetation and manures and slurry in your AD plant you will need to register exemption [U10 Spreading waste on agricultural land to confer benefit or exemption](#).

You could also register exemption [U11 Spreading waste on non-agricultural land to confer benefit](#).

Related permits

If you cannot comply with the limits and quantities in this exemption you will need to apply for an [environmental permit](#). We have produced a standard permit (SR2010No16) for on-farm anaerobic digestion.