

15th November 2011

This summer, the University of Sussex, Julie's Bicycle and the Power Providers' Forum – an informal network of power suppliers and promoters – worked with festival promoters and energy suppliers to carry out research into the scale of biodiesel and renewable energy uptake at UK festivals.

Key Findings

UK music festivals consume about 12 million litres of diesel per year, generating an estimated 48,000MWh of electricity and 31,600t CO₂e emissions. That's the equivalent of powering nearly half a million homes for a year.

Waste vegetable oil (WVO) biodiesel is currently meeting 3-6% of festival power supply demand.

On-site renewable energy – solar powered battery, temporary wind or pedal power – is meeting just ~0.026% of power supply demand. Even if all the renewable generating capacity reported by suppliers (91kW) was used at full tilt every summer weekend, only 0.1% of festival energy demand would be met.

The uptake of renewable power is dominated by a small number of committed festivals – festivals certified Industry Green use an average of 12% WVO biodiesel and renewable energy.

Despite cost, renewable energy suppliers anticipate an increase in demand.

Recommendations

Following this research, the group came up with a list of recommendations, including:

Festivals need expertise and resources to understand and reduce their energy demand including better planning and rationalising of generators, and using more energy efficient kit for PA and lighting.

Tour bus operations can significantly reduce energy demand.

The supply of WVO biodiesel can be increased with better information.

Energy suppliers can provide better information about the power and entertainment output provided by diesel, biodiesel and renewable installations to increase confidence and promote forward-planning.

The research was conducted by Joel Baker, Masters student at Sussex University, with guidance from Helen Heathfield, Director of Energy and Environment at Julie's Bicycle. The researchers thank the Power Providers' Steering Group which included A Greener Festival, AIF, Firefly Solar, Glastonbury Festival and Kambe Events/Shambala Festival. The Steering Group are now developing a programme to increase the use of WVO biodiesel and renewable energy at festivals. For more information, email info@greenfestivalforum.org and join the online network here:

<http://juliesbicyclemusic.ning.com/?xgi=2BpS9v0ei11Tac>