



Fuelsell

A farm diversification business supplying woodfuel to local customers in Norfolk and Suffolk has doubled in size as a result of Woodfuel East's support.

Fuelsell's growth has been helped by advice and grant support from Woodfuel East to purchase equipment. They now have the capacity to supply around 3,500 tonnes of woodfuel into the firewood market and are also creating a growing number of sales via the internet.

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The Filsells are a farming family at Thorpe-next-Haddiscoe, on the Norfolk Broads, who have diversified into woodfuel supply. Faced with a declining market for pigs eight years ago, father and son farming team Malcolm and Steve Filsell set up Fuelsell.

After supplying logs by the loose truckload, the business expanded into providing pre-packed, regionally-grown and well-seasoned woodfuel ranging from log and kindling nets, sold at local stores, through to home-delivered two-cubic-metre bags.

Woodfuel East's Strategic Investment Support Programme provided grant funding towards four items of woodfuel processing equipment, with the aim of increasing output by at least 1,000 tonnes over three years. Fuelsell's staff of ten local people processed around 2,000 tonnes of regionally-grown woodfuel in 2009/10 and this figure is set to rise to 3,500 tonnes in 2010/11 – beating the growth target ahead of schedule.

Roundwood is delivered to Willow Farm by lorry, where it is seasoned to reduce its moisture content. The compact Farma 6 Timber trailer and crane then takes wood to the yard, where there is a full woodfuel production line, with processing equipment dedicated to specific tasks from creating logs and kindling, through to bagging of final woodfuel products.

Steve said: "The machinery which Woodfuel East helped us buy has made a huge difference to how much we can produce – and we can produce it more efficiently to keep up with demand. Woodfuel East's help was invaluable in getting us through the grant process and they are still helping us with advice as the business develops."

And nothing goes to waste at Fuelsell: any offcuts of wood which cannot be sold are used in the Filsells' Dragon woodburning boiler system, which provides heat and hot water to their home and office. It also provides heat which is being used in the production of Steve's new eco-firelighters which are the latest product offered by Fuelsell.

Fuelwood 'Firewood Factory'

Fuelsell's production line processes roundwood into consistently-sized split logs which are then bagged, processing two cubic metres of solid wood an hour. One solid wood tonne can fill around 60 carry-bags.

Posch Spaltfix S-300 Firewood Processor

This Austrian-built machine processes timber into logs destined for bulk deliveries.

Farma 6 Timber Trailer with crane

This compact trailer and crane is ideal for moving seasoned timber from the farm to the smaller processing yard. The crane can lift 300kg and extend to six metres.

Fuelwood Kindlet Pro

This British-made machine can convert roundwood into 150 bags of kindling an hour. It was designed for high-volume woodfuel producers, using roundwood of up to 25 cm in diameter.

Woodfuel East is supported under the Rural Development Programme for England by EEDA, Defra and the EU with additional support from the Forestry Commission.

