

Ohio

Business and Cooperative Services | Fertilizer Production Expansion Program

Bio-Digestion Helps Ohio Crops Grow Thanks to Fertilizer Grant



Team members from quasar energy group (QEG) and USDA Ohio Rural Development stand near the biodigester storage tank at quasar's facility in Wooster, Ohio. USDA Photo.

Anaerobic digestion is a natural process that uses microorganisms to break down organic materials, producing both biogas and a nutrient rich byproduct, or digestate, that can be used as fertilizer for crops.

Cleveland-based quasar energy group (QEG), a renewable energy and waste management firm, relies on anaerobic digestion technology to produce high-nitrogen, bio-rich fertilizer that benefits more than 100 farmers throughout northeast Ohio.

Anaerobic digestion helps QEG transform organic material, traditionally buried in landfills, into an all-natural organic fertilizer. And with capacity to mix,

transport, and apply its product directly to a farmer's field, quasar creates a level of efficiency that is value-added for its customers.

"This benefits the farmer and there are organic benefits to the soil," said Steve Smith, QEG Chief Financial Officer. "This is a ready-made product that replenishes organics and puts them back into the soil. Without USDA we would not be a value-added product for farmers."

To ensure quasar could meet growing customer demand, it connected with Ohio's Rural Development team to apply for a Fertilizer Production Expansion Program (FPEP) grant, a program designed to increase the manufacture and production of fertilizer made in the United States.

With the grant, quasar will upgrade its nine-million-gallon Wiles Lagoon in Wayne County to increase preparation and storage capacity, build a new biofertilizer manufacturing and storage facility in Grafton, Ohio, repair and restart an existing digester in Norton, Ohio, and add new technology to make operations more efficient.

These upgrades help quasar increase its ability to produce and store more than 24 million gallons of liquid fertilizer, meeting increasing demand for local farmers with a sustainable, eco-friendly product.

quasar energy group – Fertilizer Production Expansion Program

“Without this capital, none of this is possible because there are opportunities open to us that were not there before,” said Smith. “We are investing a lot of this to grow capacity which allows us to produce fertilizer more economically and we would not have been able to do this without USDA.”

Another “value-added” feature quasar provides is through an in-house lab facility in Wooster, which provides on-site, real time quality control to ensure its product has a high nutrient content that meets all regulatory standards for safety, compliance, and quality.

“We take a problem and turn it into a product,” said Smith. “When we reach our full run rate, we will be able to produce multiples over our initial expectations.”

USDA Rural Development is committed to increasing economic development across the country, and the Fertilizer Production Expansion Program is an example of investing in American manufacturing and ensuring access to reliable, affordable fertilizer for the nation’s farmers.



Wiles Lagoon, quasar’s 9-million-gallon storage and distribution holding area in Wayne County. USDA Photo.

Obligation: \$3,959,285

Obligation Date: September 27, 2023

Congressional: U.S. Rep. Max Miller (OH-07); U.S. Senators Sherrod Brown and J.D. Vance

Impact: Expanded capacity to produce domestic source of fertilizer for farmers in NE Ohio.