



Alton Court

Dilwyn, Herefordshire

The Wellings family have been at Alton Court in Herefordshire for over 120 years. Will who is the 5th generation of farmers with his brother Richard and his father Stuart. They are predominantly beef and arable farmers with the addition of cider orchards producing apples for Gaymers, Aston Manor and Bulmers since the 1940's.

The first Bulmers cider was pressed by H P Bulmer in 1887, using apples from the orchard at his fathers rectory in Hereford. Since then the Bulmers brand has expanded globally, but still relies on the supply of quality apples from local orchards in Herefordshire, some of which are grown at Alton Court.



Will himself returned to the farm in 2007 at the age of 17 after studying at Hartpury college and it wasn't long until he got very interested in renewables. Will was instrumental in the installation of a Biomass Boiler and Solar Panels at the farm to provide both heating and electricity to the site.

As their business has expanded, ultimately so have the energy demands of the site. With a desire to reduce both their carbon footprint and the electricity bills of the business they began their research into a selection of different renewable systems. The family heard about CHP systems around July 2015, firstly having a look at Fröling systems, who are better known for their biomass boilers. Will then attended one of the Arbor Heat and Power open days and by being able to see a system in person and ask the questions he needed to make his decision to go with the ArborElectroGen45 Unit and progressed very quickly from there.

The decision to choose the Arbor 45 system was due to the fact that the technology was more proven and the figures ultimately were more favourable than other similar systems. Will states that one of the main benefits is that the Arbor system uses less wood at a higher moisture content, allowing the fuel costs to be lower than with other systems available.

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The existing biomass boiler manages to provide most of the sites demands for heat, heating the farm house, farm office and workshop, which means that the heat from the CHP can be used for wood drying. Therefore, Will added a Pezzolato EPG50 wood drying and screening system to his site. This addition has allowed Will to buy cheaper wood and dry chip for both the Arbor 45 CHP system and for his existing biomass boiler, while becoming a net exporter of electricity.



“The earlier you get into something within the Renewables sector the better”

Will Wellings

Will is already looking to the future and ways to further improve the site sustainability. Every year they have to prune the apple trees in the orchard, to which they are left with the waste product which can add up to around 40 Tonnes per year.

Taking these pruning's, chipping the branches and drying them down to the right moisture content they could then be used to supplement the fuel requirements of the CHP and biomass boiler. This would be a very sustainable operation as it would be using effectively a yearly waste product to reduce the requirement of fresh woodchip that would have to be brought in for the operation of the on-site renewables.

