

Text Version for Biomass Program Manager Paul Bryan's Tour of the Feedstocks Section of the Biomass 2011 Interactive Exhibit Hall

[The video shows Biomass Program Manager Paul Bryan interviewing Mark Downing of Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL).]

Mark Downing: This exhibit demonstrates the variety of feedstocks that you can use for not only conversion for liquid fuels, but also for power.

Paul Bryan: Great. This is nice, nice variety. You've got both woody and grassy crops.

Mark Downing: And they all fit in one Jeep.

Paul Bryan: Ah, so we know how they all got up here.

Mark Downing: Yes, yes. It worked really nicely.

Paul Bryan: Excellent.

Mark Downing: Both the woody species and the herbaceous species are candidates for different conditions and different conversion technologies.

Paul Bryan: Right.

Mark Downing: All the folks say that southern pine grows very nicely under certain conditions.

Paul Bryan: Good.

Mark Downing: We brought some willow from New York, to coordinate with the Argonne display.

[Video cuts to images of various live feedstock samples included in the Feedstocks station.]

Paul Bryan: So how many of these are purpose biomass crops, versus things that you would take waste from?

Mark Downing: You could plant any one of these for a reason, for a fuel. Corn is the best example. Because that is our best...

Paul Bryan: Sure.

Mark Downing: But any of the rest of them. For the woody, we have salvaging operations for logging and for wood waste. You can pull the bark. The pulp and paper industry has been using bark for many years.

Paul Bryan: Indeed they have.

Mark Downing: So this is not a new thing. The fiber industry is good at handling lots and lots of biomass.

Paul Bryan: Well, with all the new natural gas that has been discovered in the United States, it may make more sense to produce energy from that, and start moving that hog fuel into liquid fuels and products.

Mark Downing: Keeping it domestic.

Paul Bryan: Yes. Well that's the other issue, of course. There is a huge demand for wood pellets over in Europe. At the moment, they are paying more per ton, than we can afford for biofuels feedstock.

Mark Downing: The alfalfa issue is another one. They make a high-value, high-protein leaf meal, and that goes overseas as well. But we could use the stems for co-firing, for gasification, as well.

Paul Bryan: Excellent.

Mark Downing: And it's going to take the industry to help us pull this off. So we got, some of the donations, trees from Arbor Gen... We're actually breeding these plant materials to try to maximize their genetic expression, and to give us varieties, that are drought tolerant, disease resistance that we need.

[Video cuts again to images of live feedstock samples.]

Paul Bryan: Is there university interaction?

Mark Downing: Yes, there is lots of university interaction. You know, that is part of what BESC is all about as well, and the other centers, to make sure we can maximize the genetic expression, the phenotypic expression, and bring out those qualities of feedstock, that do exactly what we need. And it's the quality that is key. And that will add value to the feedstocks.

Paul Bryan: Well, the old joke about the three most important things in real estate: location, location, location. I've always said the three most important things in biomass are: feedstock, feedstock, and feedstock.