

Dairy chooses concentrated solar thermal technology to reduce its heating costs

Background

A co-operative dairy operates a milk processing facility of 140,000 litres per day (lpd) capacity at Vijayapur, Karnataka, South India. The facility operates one briquette-fired boiler of 3 TPH capacity.

Problem

As a part of their continuous improvement drive, the management of the dairy wished to save on process heating costs. They invited A.T.E. to develop and install a customised solution for their needs.

Solution

After extensive discussions with the dairy on their process requirements, A.T.E. proposed a concentrated solar thermal (CST) solution to provide hot water at 90°C as feed water to the boiler, to the crate-washing section, and to the pasteurisation process. The CST system was designed with high-efficiency compound parabolic concentrators (CPC), and thus the area on the roof of the dairy was adequate. The system was sized to deliver an average 8,500 lpd of hot water at 90°C for 9 months of the year (160 MWh_{th} annually).

System Description

The concentrated solar thermal system comprises a primary circuit with the array of CPC modules, a secondary circuit with storage tanks to store the heat and a process integration circuit. The heat transfer liquid (water treated by reverse osmosis) circulating in the closed-loop primary circuit is heated in the CPC modules, and then exchanges its heat with softened water in the secondary circuit. This hot water in the secondary circuit is stored in stainless steel tanks. When the temperature of the water in the tanks exceeds a threshold value, process pumps transfer the

hot water to the applications. The entire system is designed for reliable and automated operation. In addition, the remote monitoring solution provided with the solar thermal installation makes it possible to monitor the performance of the system in real time/daily/monthly, anywhere, anytime.

Results

In a span of just 25 days in winter of 2017-18, this concentrated solar thermal installation produced 15 MWh_{th}, thus saved the dairy 4.2 tonnes of briquettes and avoided about 7.4 tonnes of CO₂ emissions. Annually, this solar thermal installation will help the dairy save 42 tonnes of briquettes, bolstering its bottom-line, and also reduce its CO₂ emissions by about 77 tonnes!



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