

Bioenergy in Use

Ncn'ean Distillery – Utilising Biomass Heat in Sustainable Whisky Production

Ncn'ean distillery on the remote Morvern Peninsula began production in March 2017 and was planned from the ground up to be the most sustainable new whisky distillery in the country. As well as drawing on local spring water, 100% renewable electricity and using the spent grain to feed cows on the adjacent farm, they also opted for sustainable biomass as the most environmentally sound and cost-effective way to provide steam for the distilling process.

Capable of utilising woodchips at up to 50% moisture content, the distillery energy centre has an 850kW Kohlbach boiler at its heart. Providing steam at 7 bar, the boiler delivers 100% of the process energy on site without any backup, and also heats the offices, bar and other facilities, with the waste heat created by the grate cooling system used in the nearby bonded warehouses.

By consuming around 1,000 tonnes of timber rather than 220,000 litres of imported fuel oil, the distillery not only avoids over 600 tonnes of fossil carbon emissions each year, but also makes a valuable contribution to sustaining the local rural economy. All the timber used for fuel is grown within sight of the distillery on the surrounding Drimnin Estate, which now has an outlet for its low-grade and unmerchantable timber, improving the overall economics of their forestry operations and creating employment in the supply chain.

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