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17<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Editor,

***RE: 'RHI Inquiry: Farmers 'gamed the system' under Britain's £23bn green heat scheme'***

We are writing on behalf of the Wood Heat Association (WHA) and the UK Pellet Council, in relation to your article '*RHI Inquiry: Farmers 'gamed the system' under Britain's £23bn green heat scheme*' (16/03/20). Your article says that whilst the RHI scheme in Great Britain was not corrupt, it had major faults including doubts over whether it delivered on carbon cutting goals.

We dispute the assertion that the RHI has not supported heat decarbonisation. It is true that biomass has been the most successful technology under the RHI, representing more than 85% of all installations under the non-domestic scheme. It has been particularly successful at decarbonising the public sector- predominantly schools and hospitals, as well as care homes, agriculture and the hospitality and leisure sector. In the agricultural sector biomass use for heating has grown considerably in the last ten years and now makes up 35% of heat provision.

Your article also states that 'many environmentalists dispute biomass' status as a carbon neutral fuel'. It should be pointed out the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) has said sustainably managed and harvested biomass can make a significant contribution to tackling climate change. Indeed, when replacing oil or electric heating, biomass can deliver up to 90% greenhouse gas savings. Underpinning this, biomass fuel supported by the RHI must meet stringent sustainability standards as set out by the Government's Biomass Suppliers List (BSL).

We are also concerned about the article framing the debate as 'heat pumps vs biomass boilers'. Both are supported under the non-domestic and domestic RHI. Given the diverse building stock and divergent heat requirements across the UK, we need a full range of renewable heat technologies to successfully decarbonise heat. Any suggestion that supporting biomass is "backing the wrong horse" fails to appreciate that there are situations where biomass represents the best solution to decarbonisation.



The real problem faced by the renewable heat industry is the uncertainty surrounding a possible extension of, and successor to, the RHI, which is due to close to new applicants in March 2021. This threatens putting the industry on a cliff edge and puts at risk the pipeline of current renewable heat projects in the UK.

The biomass industry is keen to work with the Government to ensure the continuation of a supportive renewable heat policy framework which enables biomass to continue to play an important role in delivering our net zero future.

Yours sincerely,

Neil Harrison  
Chair of the Wood Heat Association

Mark Lebus  
Chair of the UK Pellet Council

## **Notes**

### ***About The Wood Heat Association***

The Wood Heat Association is the UK trade association for the modern biomass heating industry. We bring together wood fuel suppliers, biomass boiler and stove installers and distributors, energy companies and developers. We are part of the REA, the association for Renewable Energy and Clean Technologies.

### ***About the UK Pellet Council***

The UK Pellet Council (UKPC) is a trade body, which represents the interests of the UK wood pellet sector. Its members are manufacturers and distributors of wood pellets for heating. These issues include standardisation and certification of pellet quality, safety, and security of supply, education and training.