

5.B.2 - Biological Treatment of Waste: Anaerobic Digestion at Biogas Facilities

Short description

Within NFR category **5.B.2**, ammonia (NH₃) emissions from the anaerobic digestion at biogas facilities are reported.

NFR-Code	Name of Category	Method	AD	EF	Key Category ¹
5.B.2	Anaerobic Digestion at Biogas Facilities	CS	NS	CS	<i>no key category</i>

Separately collected organic waste (biowaste) from e.g. households, public garden and park service, food industry, restaurants, canteens and from agriculture can be treated in two different ways: aerobically (composting) and anaerobically (biogas production).

The aim of the treatment is the production of digestate, leading to the recycling of nutrients and organic matter.

The produced digestate is used as fertilizer or soil improver in agriculture or horticulture and also in private gardening. In Germany, about one third of the organic waste is treated in anaerobic digestion plants and ammonia (NH₃) is an important emission to air.

Method

Emissions from anaerobic digestion at biogas facilities are not a key source and of minor priority.

Activity data

Official statistical data (Statistisches Bundesamt, Fachserie 19, Reihe 1: Abfallentsorgung (Waste management), Table 2.1; ¹⁾) are used for the estimation. The data are published on a yearly basis with an exception for the actual year of reporting. The activity data for the actual year of reporting are obtained, initially, by carrying the relevant data from the previous year forward, in unchanged form. In the following year, when the actual activity data for the given year becomes available, they replace the data that were carried forward. This procedure has only a very small impact on the total emissions in the relevant current report year.

Emission factors

The emission factors used for calculating NH₃ emissions are based on emission data from a research project ²⁾.

Uncertainties

The AD from Statistisches Bundesamt have an uncertainty of $\pm 2\%$ whereas the uncertainty for the EF is $-18/+920\%$ (ibid.).

Recalculations

When preparing the current inventory data, statistical data are only available for the previous reporting year, as the Federal Statistical Office's waste statistics are one year behind schedule. The current reporting year must therefore be extrapolated on the basis of the previous year. The result of this approach is revised by the correct data in the following year. For this reason, annual recalculations are required for the previous year. Since the resulting recalculation is always extremely small, it is no longer reported here.

However, for the year 2010, an error has been noticed in the reported waste volume. This error is corrected in the current reporting. Instead of 3.416.300 t of biowaste as reported in 2020, 3.416.944 t were used in the anaerobic digestion plants. NH_3 emissions are thus corrected from 936.07 t to 936.24 t for 2010

Planned improvements

Currently no improvements are planned.

¹⁾

Statistisches Bundesamt, Fachserie FS 19, Reihe 1: Abfallentsorgung; Wiesbaden; URL: <https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/UmweltstatistischeErhebungen/Abfallwirtschaft/Abfallentsorgung.html>

²⁾

Carsten Cuhls, Birte Mähl, Joachim Clemens; gewitra Ingenieurgesellschaft für Wissenstransfer mbH: Ermittlung der Emissionssituation bei der Verwertung von Bioabfällen; <https://www.umweltbundesamt.de/publikationen/ermittlung-der-emissionssituation-bei-der>; im Auftrag des Umweltbundesamtes, April 2015