

Press release

The first public green hydrogen filling station for buses, cars and lorries goes into official operation in Niebüll

Reußenköge/ Niebüll, 26 August 2021

The hydrogen filling station in Niebüll, North Frisia, officially went into operation today. The key feature here is that hydrogen production is regional and climate-neutral, and the hydrogen is made available for use by private cars, lorries and public transport. The scheme is the first of its kind in Germany. At the festive opening, numerous guests from the region were welcomed by Ove Petersen, co-founder and CEO of the GP JOULE Group, and André Steinau, Managing Director of the project company eFarming GmbH & Co. KG. Speeches were given by Astrid Damerow, Member of the Bundestag for the North Frisia constituency, Manfred Uekermann, District President, and Uwe Christiansen, Mayor of Niebüll. The Federal Minister of Transport and Digital Infrastructure, Andreas Scheuer, sent his congratulations in a video message.

“Hydrogen is invisible and volatile,” the Minister of Transport began. But the powerful ideas and projects relating to “element number one” were clearly visible, he said. “This is the case in North Frisia, where eFarm is setting the benchmark and providing inspiration for lots of people.” The minister was previously a guest at the inauguration of the hydrogen production plant in Bosbüll in the summer of 2020. He said he was particularly impressed by the holistic approach that eFarm applied to all aspects of the scheme - from production and distribution to drive technology and fleet use. “I very much hope that your North Frisian pioneering spirit, enthusiasm and innovative spirit will rub off on many other regions, companies and projects.”

eFarm - role model for a green regional hydrogen economy

The project has indeed found its way into day-to-day life, with two hydrogen-powered fuel cell buses having been in service in North Frisia since May. A second hydrogen filling station in Husum is in trial operation and is due to be opened to the public on 13 September. The filling stations and buses are all part of the joint project eFarm which involves a total of 20 shareholders based in the north of Germany. The energy for hydrogen production comes from wind farms in the north of Schleswig-Holstein. The wind power is used by electrolyzers to generate climate-neutral hydrogen directly on site. The hydrogen is sold at the two public filling stations in Niebüll and Husum. The fundamental ideas behind eFarm are the locally based dovetailing of power generation and power consumption, and the interlinking of the electricity, mobility and heat sectors.

“From now on, we will be producing and selling fuel from renewable energies for mobility in North Frisia, among other things. As far as I know, this has never happened before. Even now, eFarm is capable of replacing some 1,200,000 litres of diesel per year - a figure that will be multiplied in the years to come. What is needed now are incentive systems to get lorry and bus companies to invest in the vehicles,” said Ove Petersen, stressing the importance of the eFarm project. It is currently the largest hydrogen mobility project of its kind in Germany.

The eFarm approach seems to be making an impression elsewhere, too: even before its completion, eFarm had become a blueprint for other hydrogen regions in Germany. Niebüll's mayor Uwe Christiansen welcomes this development: "People from all over Germany know our municipality as a transport hub for tourism in North Frisia. The fact that we're now also regarded as a pioneer in putting the energy and transport turnaround into practice is something that makes me feel very proud."

Regional fuel for all

For the fuel cell buses, eFarm and the bus operator Autokraft have chosen the H2.City Gold model made by Portuguese manufacturer Caetano. The buses are air-conditioned and can accommodate up to 39 passengers seated and 35 standing. In addition to buses, company cars and private vehicles will also be able to refuel with hydrogen in Niebüll and Husum. The filling stations are equally suitable for passenger cars and commercial vehicles. A full tank for a fuel cell car costs about 50 euros and enables a range of up to 600 kilometres.

"Filling up with hydrogen is just as easy as it is with conventional fuels - after four to five minutes you're done and off you go," explains André Steinau, Managing Director of the project company eFarming GmbH & Co. KG. Invoicing is handled conveniently by means of a special fuel card with a PIN. The eFarm project itself has around thirty fuel cell cars, but green hydrogen is already beginning to attract other interested parties. "We've heard from private individuals and businesses in the area that there are plans to convert about 100 more cars to hydrogen. Many of them are already out and about on the roads of North Frisia," added André Steinau.

eFarm - an excellent example of a regional hydrogen economy

The eFarm hydrogen network project is currently the largest green hydrogen mobility project in Germany. It received the German Renewables Award in September 2020 for linking regional renewable energy production to local consumption. The award is presented by Cluster Erneuerbare Energien Hamburg for outstanding innovation and personal commitment in the area of renewable energies. The eFarm project was initiated by GP JOULE in 2017. It involves 20 regional shareholders, including citizens' wind farms, solar parks and municipal utility companies. All stakeholders attach importance to the fact that the valuable wind power is put to efficient use: electrolysis only involves part of the energy being converted into hydrogen, the rest is turned into heat. The latter is not lost in the eFarm project, however: it is used to heat buildings. As a result, a total of 95 per cent of the energy from the wind power is utilised. eFarm has received funding of EUR 8.8 million from sources that include the Federal Ministry of Transport.

Photographs



Caption: Germany's first public filling station for green, regionally produced hydrogen to refuel cars, lorries and buses is located in Niebüll.

Current pictures of the event will be available for download as of **2 p.m.** on **26.08.2021** at <https://www.gp-joule.de/newsroom/pressefotos>.

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About GP JOULE

Founded in 2009 based on the belief that a 100 per cent renewable energy supply is feasible, GP JOULE is now a system provider for integrated energy solutions from solar, wind and biomass power as well as being a partner at the supply level for electricity, heat, hydrogen and electromobility. This makes GP JOULE a pioneering company in the area of cross-sector linkage. Some 400 people work for the medium-sized group of companies in Germany, Europe and North America. GP JOULE holds the 2019 Schleswig-Holstein Business Environmental Award.

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