Natural Gas Utilization in Agriculture

Converting from Propane to Natural Gas

Farmers have long explored alternative management techniques and advanced equipment to provide energy savings associated with grain drying. Propane is a clean-burning fuel source that can be effectively distributed to rural areas that lack access to natural gas infrastructure, making it an ideal fuel source for numerous agricultural operations, including grain drying.

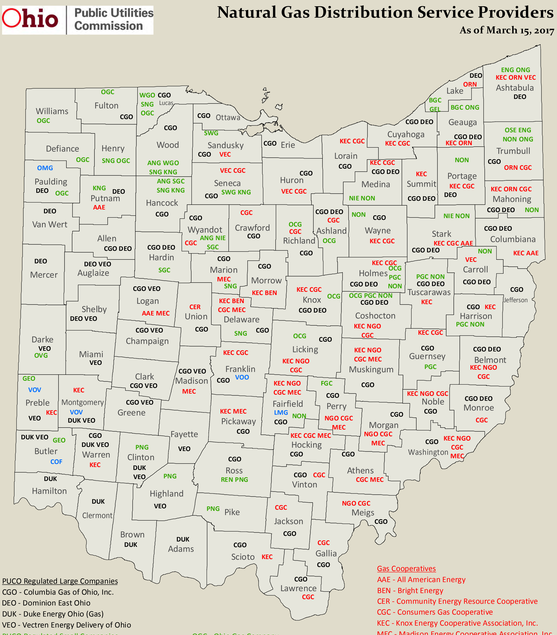
According to the National Propane Education and Resource Council, propane is used by nearly 900,000 farms across the country, powering roughly 80 percent of U.S. grain drying operations. While propane has long been a critical energy source in agriculture, Ohio is in the midst of an energy transition that has led many Ohio farmers to consider investing in natural gas infrastructure to support the energy demands of their farm operations.

Photo: United Soybean Board

Switching to Natural Gas

In most instances, large interstate or intrastate natural gas pipelines are under very high pressure; therefore, local farms are often not allowed to tap into these. However, if there is a local natural gas distribution line, it may be cost-effective to switch from propane to natural gas. But there are a number of considerations beyond the simple project payback period to investigate. Consider the following to determine if it makes sense to switch your farm from propane to natural gas:

- Proximity of the nearest natural gas line to your farm
- Peak demand—is there enough natural gas capacity for your farm during the drying season?
- Fuel price
- Cost to extend the line
- Project planning and timing



For More Information

Energy price uncertainty and its relative cost in the production of crops has emerged as one of the greatest concerns for farmers. OSU Extension and the Ohio Soybean Council seek to provide resources and information that will help farmers make informed decisions regarding energy use on the farm. Visit **energizeohio.osu.edu** for more information.

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OHIO SOYBEAN COUNCIL

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