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Dominion Energy and Smithfield Foods Break Ground on Largest Renewable Natural Gas Project in North Carolina

CLINTON, N.C., Aug. 16, 2019 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- [Dominion Energy](#) and [Smithfield Foods, Inc.](#) are pleased to announce that the companies are breaking ground on North Carolina's largest renewable natural gas (RNG) project through their joint venture, Align Renewable Natural Gas (RNG)SM. Located in Duplin and Sampson counties, this project will generate enough energy to power more than 3,500 homes annually upon completion. Align RNG is a multi-state joint venture between Dominion Energy and Smithfield that will capture methane emissions from hog farms and convert them into RNG to power homes and businesses.

"Breaking ground on this project with Dominion Energy is an exciting first step in bringing Align RNG to life," said Kraig Westerbeek, senior director of Smithfield Renewables and hog production environmental affairs for Smithfield Foods. "This project implements proven 'manure-to-energy' technology across a number of farms to produce reliable renewable energy for our community and contributes to our company's ambitious goal to reduce our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions 25% by 2025."

As part of this initiative, technology will be installed across as many as 19 area farms to transform manure into RNG that will be processed and injected into existing natural gas distribution systems to serve local homes and businesses. This project is modeled after the [Optima KV project](#), which captures biogas on five Smithfield contract farms in North Carolina, and similar projects on Smithfield farms in Northern Missouri and Utah.

"What we are starting today is truly transformational," said Gary Courts, Dominion Energy's general manager of new gas business development. "We're using the power of innovation to make our energy cleaner and our farms more sustainable than ever before," Courts continued. "With renewable natural gas, everyone wins. It's good for the environment and our planet. It's a huge win for the farmers. And it's around-the-clock renewable energy for consumers."

The 300,000 MMBTU of renewable energy this project is estimated to produce will play a key role in the state of North Carolina's historic initiative to reduce GHG emissions over the next decade and will help expand the state's energy portfolio with a reliable source of renewable energy. The sale of RNG generated by these projects will also provide family farmers with an additional source of revenue.

"This project is providing an incredible opportunity to turn one of our largest cost drivers – manure management – into a new revenue stream," said Terry Tate, manager of DM Farms of Rose Hill and a Smithfield contract grower. "Working with Dominion Energy and Smithfield on this project was an easy choice. I'm proud to be part of an initiative that is improving both the viability and durability of our farms while benefiting the local community with a renewable energy source."

"Dominion Energy and Smithfield are supporting the growth of agriculture in North Carolina, the state's leading industry," said North Carolina Rep. Jimmy Dixon. "This project forecasts an exciting shift in the role that farmers play by providing opportunities within the energy sector that expand their capabilities and improve their bottom line."

This is the first "manure-to-energy" project to begin construction under [Align RNG since the joint venture was announced in late 2018](#). Additional projects are planned in North Carolina, Utah, and Virginia, and are projected to produce enough energy to power 14,000 homes and businesses in total. The emissions reduction associated with these projects equate to planting 7.8 million new trees or taking 100,000 passenger vehicles off the road.

For more information about Align RNG, visit alignrng.com.

About Dominion Energy

Nearly 7.5 million customers in 18 states energize their homes and businesses with electricity or natural gas from Dominion Energy (NYSE: D), headquartered in Richmond, Va. The company is committed to sustainable, reliable, affordable and safe energy and is one of the nation's largest producers and transporters of energy with

about \$100 billion of assets providing electric generation, transmission and distribution, as well as natural gas storage, transmission, distribution and import/export services. The company expects to cut generating fleet carbon dioxide emissions 80 percent by 2050 and reduce methane emissions from its gas assets 50 percent by 2030. Please visit www.DominionEnergy.com to learn more.

About Smithfield Foods

Smithfield Foods is a \$15 billion global food company and the world's largest pork processor and hog producer. In the United States, the company is also the leader in numerous packaged meats categories with popular brands including Smithfield®, Eckrich®, Nathan's Famous®, Farmland®, Armour®, Farmer John®, Kretschmar®, John Morrell®, Cook's®, Gwaltney®, Carando®, Margherita®, Curly's®, Healthy Ones®, Morliny®, Krakus®, and Berlinki®. Smithfield Foods is committed to providing good food in a responsible way and maintains robust animal care, community involvement, employee safety, environmental, and food safety and quality programs. For more information, visit www.smithfieldfoods.com, and connect with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Instagram](#).

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