

A banner for AgSTAR Focus featuring a photograph of an industrial facility with large pipes and a building in the background. The text "AgSTAR Focus" is overlaid in white on a blue background.

AgSTAR Focus



Dear AgSTAR partners and stakeholders,

April 2021

Happy Earth Day! This week, we wanted to share with you some helpful tips from our AgSTAR Anaerobic Digester Operator Guidebook on some basic “checkup” items you can perform to make sure your AD system is operating optimally.

Spring Anaerobic Digester System Checkup

Spring is a good time to give your anaerobic digester (AD) system its annual checkup. You can plan for activities and maintenance for the upcoming warmer weather and perform tasks that were overlooked or postponed due to inclement weather. Keeping your AD system operating in tip-top shape will maximize profitability by optimizing biogas yield, improving biogas quality, and improving operating uptime, all while minimizing expenses.

AgSTAR’s [Operator Guidebook](#) has some great tips to ensure your AD system is operating effectively. This spring, consider performing the following activities:

- Inspect all mechanical equipment such as pumps, mixers, and engine-gensets (Operator Guidebook sections [8.2–8.6](#)), and schedule any needed overhauls or replacements. Order needed parts or replacement units and contract for third-party services.

- Inspect all structures for evidence of damage or deterioration, check for biogas leakage, and arrange for necessary repairs (Operator Guidebook section [8.1](#)).
- Plan for adequate digester effluent storage capacity if sufficient land for application will not be available due to field crop production.
- Confirm the accuracy of all instrumentation used for performance monitoring, such as biogas flow meters and analyzers, and for sample analysis (Operator Guidebook sections [4.4.1](#) and [8.5.1](#) for biogas monitoring and section [5.1](#) for digester operating parameter testing).
- Plan for mitigating odor releases during warm weather. Arrange for just-in-time delivery of wastes for co-digestion when possible.
- Prepare for the warm weather influx of pests such as insects and rodents.
- Review monitoring records to determine if there any gaps and adjust the monitoring plan if necessary. (General data recording and evaluation guidance can be found in [Chapter 5](#) of the Operator Guidebook.)
- Review all permits and contractual agreements to determine if renewal or renegotiation is pending.
- Review the established safety plan for the AD system with the system's managers and operators (Operator Guidebook [Chapter 10](#)).

Visit the [AgSTAR website](#) for additional resources to help maintain and operate your AD system throughout the year.