

Firm 'committed' to reducing waste

Landfill should be last solution to waste problem

LANDFILL should be the last solution to waste, not the first, bosses from leading waste management company Indaver told Meath Councillors during a visit to Belgium this week.

And the company said that it wanted public backing to proceed with its £60 million waste operation at Carranstown, Duleek, which includes incineration and a major recycling operation.

With planning permission to be lodged in January, Indaver's General Manager, Ronny Ansoms, told the delegation that his company was committed to reducing waste.

Its commitment to recycling, he said, often led people to ask why the company would want to recycle when it could profit more from incinerating recyclable items. They did it for three reasons:

- it was of sound mind that the incineration of waste was good, and nobody could be against that;

INDAVER VISIT

by NIAL MOONAN in Belgium
moonan@rogheda-independent.ie

- what Indaver tried to sell was the service of solving the waste problem of its clients, and a successful sell of all services were based on credibility;

- Mr. Ansoms used the analogy of a doctor promising to make a patient better so that they would not have to return for treatment regularly.

'He's doing something that is against his immediate interest, and the same thing is happening with waste,' he said.

Mr. Ansoms said that the Carranstown plant would produce dioxins, and it could not be guaranteed, he said, that these would not be harmful to human health.

Its dioxin emissions would be far below the maximum allowable standards.

'All European legislation is based

on studies of maximum allowable concentrations. I can not say that that maximum allowable concentration will not damage health. Uncontrolled landfills also produce dioxins. The more you measure, the more you study and the more you know. I am not saying dioxins are not dangerous,' he said.

The dioxin family, he said, was a dangerous substance, and Indaver would minimise that risk.

'What action can we do which bears no risk? Everything we do will have a certain amount of risk,' added Mr. Ansoms.

Indaver Ireland Manager, John Ahern, said that Ireland produces 25g of dioxins every year. The plant at Carranstown would produce .01g of dioxins.

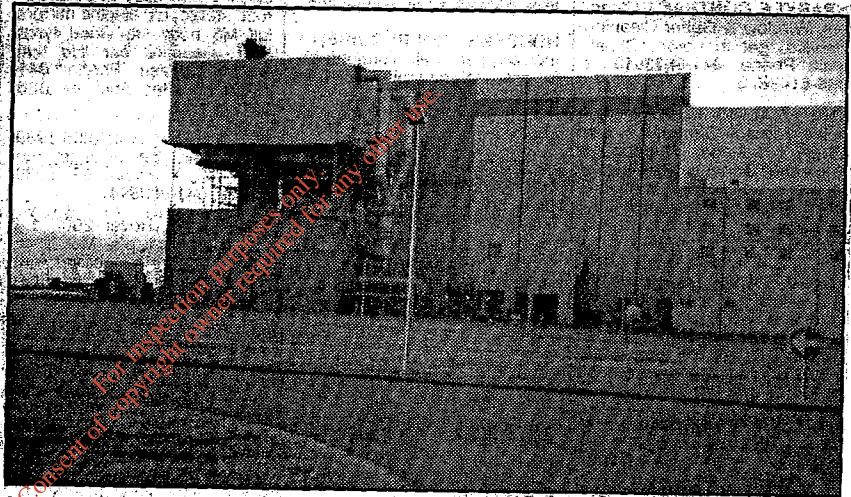
In relation to traffic, six lorries out of a traffic count of 1,000 will use the facility every hour. The plant will not deal with hazardous waste, and at the end of the incineration process, a small amount of ash is used in landfill, the rest for road foundations.



DAVER General Manager, Ronny Ansoms, explains the operation of an aerobic composting plant in Grimbergen.



MEATH Councillors Patsy O'Neill (back left), Shaun Lynch, Tommy Reilly and Tom Kelly, Indaver Ireland General Manager, John Ahern, Councillors Gabriel Cribben and Damien English and (front) Mayor of Beveren, Smet Francois, and Councillor Ann Dillon Gallagher, in Belgium.



PART of the Indaver Belgium 200,000 tonne grate incinerator at Beveren, which is similar to the proposed Carranstown plant.

Smelly, dark and damp, but the compost looks good!

IT'S smelly, dark and damp . . . and somewhere you do not want to be wearing your new suit.

But the compost looks and feels as good as if it was bought in a garden store anywhere between Carranstown and Grimbergen - about 30 minutes from Brussels and the site for this state-of-the-art aerobic composting plant and our first stop-off.

And Indaver reckons Ireland needs several of them.

Not a feature of the Carranstown application - which will now be submitted in January - the plant, built in 1996, recycles 65,000 tonnes of waste, which in Ireland goes to landfill every day of the week.

It accepts kitchen waste, garden waste, vegetables and fruit, and despite producing obnoxious mounds of foulness, ends up as quality compost.

It's the type of waste which only the die-hard environmentally conscious are bothering to recycle in this country.

Built in 1996, the plant has attracted objections, mainly due to the smell, which Indaver addressed by spending millions on odour control.

Waste is decomposed aerobically. Eleven weeks later, it has passed through the cycle, 99% of the odours are eliminated and the air ejected through a stack. A waste water treatment plant has also been constructed for water discharge.

Indaver says it has no problem selling the final product, compost, which is also used to rehabilitate polluted soils.

Fifteen years ago, Belgians had to pay a fee to their local authority for taking care of waste; now they have to buy refuse sacks and identifying stickers - which are sometimes stolen by those anxious to have their waste collected without paying.

The concept of the Polluter Pays Principle is being embraced here - while once extending to industry, it is now part of every household in Belgium that waste charges are determined by how much one produces.



INDAVER'S Ronny Ansoms answers Councillors' questions during the visit to the Beveren incinerator.

A mission to continue innovation

INDAVER says in its mission statement that it wants to be a continuously innovating, professional organisation with an exceptional know-how in waste management which offers its clients and the community a sustainable high quality, total solution at a fair price and which aims for a fair compensation of its shareholders.

In its bid to offer knowledge of household waste, the company operates treatment schemes (waste avoidance – landfill) and public awareness and motivation, development of public

private partnerships and experience with European waste legislation.

Founded in Belgium in 1985, it has a capital of 13 million Euros and its shareholders comprise Government institutions (50.1%) and industry (49.9%).

Indaver merged with Vlar, bringing the capital of the combined companies to 87.5 million Euros. Its international partnerships are with Minchem (Ireland), UWE-ECO (Poland), Vienituras (Latvia), Amstutz-Sibag-Schmucki (Switzerland) and AROC (Netherlands).



GLASS recycling at the Milieupark Willebroek Material Recycling facility in northern Belgium.

Ireland is lagging behind

ONE of the first things to strike the Irish delegation to the Milieupark Willebroek Material Recycling Facility, is just how far Ireland lags behind in attempting to introduce recycling here as a way of life, rather than a burden.

The facility, which recycles

packaging waste, serves as an example of what Europe has achieved, but as a damning indictment of where Ireland has miserably failed.

Glass mountains rise from the floor, plastic and drinks cans are manually sorted, corks trickle

from a machine to a waiting bin and the lids of glass containers roll along a conveyor belt.

Organisation is everything, with each recyclable element sorted and placed for distribution and re-use.

Meath councillors visit Inadver waste management facilities in Belgium

Hazardous waste could seep into waste facility says company

SOME hazardous waste could seep into the waste treatment facility at Carranstown, Duleek, Inadver has said.

The Belgian waste management company told the Louth and Meath delegation that it will not, and can not, analyse every refuse bag which will enter the £60 million plant.

A similar operation to that being proposed for Duleek, stands

on a 25-hectare site at Inadver's Beveren site, which can handle 200,000 tonnes per annum.

Also run on a 24-hour basis, refuse is burned at around 1,000 degrees Centigrade. It is a triple line grate incinerator, so maintenance of one or two lines can be undertaken while the other(s) are operational.

At first glance, the site is clean and the emissions from the 50-

metre stack (the Carranstown stack is 40 metres high) not immediately noticeable. Bordered by a motorway and train station, this plant includes landfill, dealing with material which can neither be burned nor recycled.

It already has a link with Ireland, being the first plant in Europe to accept BSE infected material from this country.

Hazardous waste, Inadver is



A computer impression showing how the proposed Carranstown plant will look from the road.

quick to emphasise, will not be part of the Carranstown facility, but despite its best efforts, it accepts that it can, just like in landfill, find its way into the operation.

'We can not analyse every single kilo of waste coming into says Indaver's General Manager, Ronnie Ansoms.

But he said that Indaver does intend proposing a hazardous waste facility elsewhere in Ireland.

On emissions from the plant, he said: 'It is a fact that the air pollution created by the traffic coming to the plant is worse than the plant itself.'

The company's attitude to dioxins is clear and definite. It says house heating and cigarette smoke contain more dioxins than incineration anywhere. And that whatever way you dispose of waste, it is impossible to get rid of

dioxins.

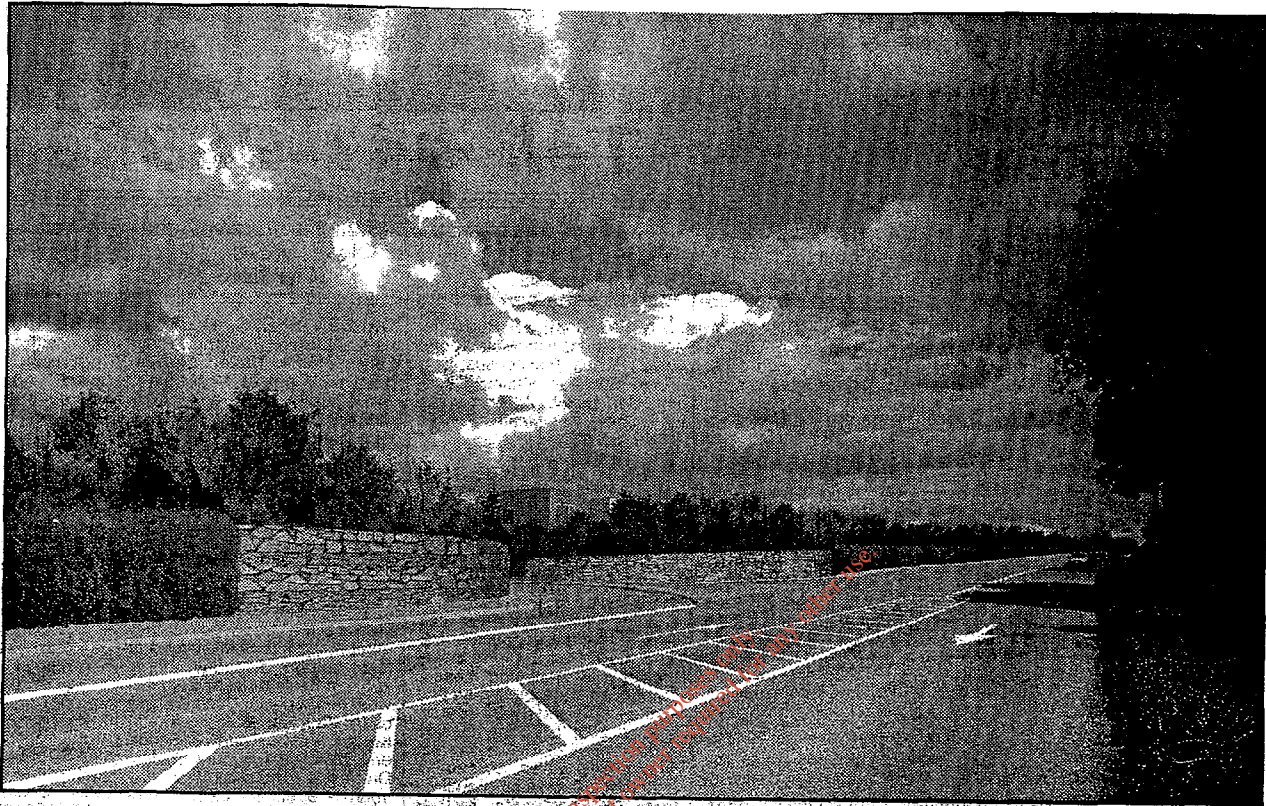
Public attitudes to incineration in Beveren, a city of 45,000, are not vociferous, according to Mayor Smet Francois, and there are now very few complaints, he told the delegation.

Mixing of the waste takes place before incineration, with a manually-controlled grab lifting five tonnes at a time. It takes one and a half days for the incinerator

to cool down, and it is maintained twice a year.

Soil at the plant is impermeable, preventing contamination.

• Fifty-thousand trees are being planted at Carranstown, which will incinerate 150,000 tonnes of refuse per year and accept another 20,000 tonnes of recyclable goods through its civic amenity centre and bring banks.



A computer impression showing how the proposed Carranstown plant will look from the road.

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VISIT ... Members of Meath County Council pictured during a recent visit to Antwerp. Back L-R are: Cllr. Shaun Lynch, Tom Kelly, Mr. John Ahern, MD of Indaver. Front L-R: Mayor of Antwerp and Cllr. Ann Dillon Gallagher.

Union leader hits out at Duleek incinerator plans

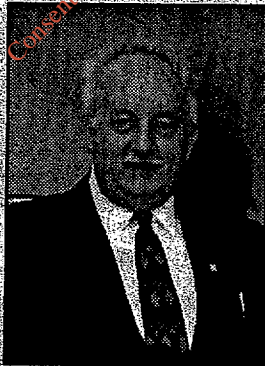
REPORT: NIAL MOONAN

A DROGHEDA union leader this week voiced his opposition to an incinerator which forms part of a massive waste facility planned for Carranstown in Duleek.

Drogheda Trades Council Chairman, Donnchadh MacRaghnaill, said he personally felt the plant should be opposed.

He was reacting to a letter sent to the Council by John Ahern, the General Manager of Indaver Ireland, who are to lodge plans for the £60 million facility with Meath County Council in January.

Mr. MacRaghnaill also said he was disappointed that a committee in Platin had orchestrated a campaign against a separate application for a power plant proposed by Marathon Power Ireland Ltd. and Scottish and Southern Energy Plc.



Donnchadh MacRaghnaill

In relation to the proposed incinerator, he said that in European countries, cement factories were required to incinerate some waste. 'Cement haven't offered their services here, but I've established that it's technically feasible here and that they could do it,' he said. He added that Drogheda was handicapped by the fact that it had several old, dirty industries, and while the town was trying to change that image, he

believed it would be difficult trying to attract hi-tech industry and simultaneously ask people to live with their wives and families beside an incinerator. 'This is a bad thing for Drogheda,' he said.

Phil Conyngham said she deplored the fact that the regional waste question recently rejected by Louth Councillors, had been referred from Councillors to an environmental strategic policy committee. 'These people who were elected on to a strategic policy committee, were asked to take on this major, major decision,' she said.

Mr. MacRaghnaill said that no public representatives from Drogheda would be involved in deciding the fate of the Carranstown application and said he feared that the plant could incorporate refuse from Co. Dublin. Delegates agreed to debate the issue at their December meeting.

The Burning Question

THE recent planning application by Indaver Ireland for a waste incinerator at Carranstown, Duleek, has proved to be one of the most controversial planning applications ever to come before Meath Co. Council.

There have been more than 4,000 individual objections to the proposals as well as a petition against the plan signed by 27,000 people.

In January Indaver applied for planning permission for a waste management facility which would include a waste-sorting plant, grate furnace, turbine and flue gas treatment facility, as well as a community recycling park. This sparked off a wave of protest meetings, petitions and formal objections to the local authority.

While the application includes recycling facilities, it is the proposed incinerator that has caused uproar among residents who have voiced fears of increased dioxin emissions in the environment. But Indaver Ireland claims emissions will be well below European standards.

INDUSTRIAL

The Indaver parent company in Belgium already runs a number of incinerators in the Flanders region including a grate incinerator similar to the

Meath Co. Council is continuing to examine in detail the contentious planning application from Indaver Ireland ahead of a decision on approval not now expected before early summer. *Ann Casey* recently visited Belgium to see how Indaver's parent company operates its incineration facilities there.

one proposed for Duleek. This grate incinerator is located at an industrial site at Beveren, a town of around 20,000 people on the outskirts of Antwerp (population 500,000).

The incinerator is located on an Indaver site that also houses a plant for recycling fluorescent tubes. The incinerator itself generates 19 megawatts of electricity. At Carranstown, Indaver expects to generate 14 Mw, 11 of which will go to the national grid and the company

will use 3 Mw on site itself.

The Belgian site is located in the middle of a large industrialised area alongside a number of petrochemical companies, a coal-burning generating station and a nuclear power station. In fact, Antwerp and its hinterland has the second largest concentration of chemical and petrochemical companies in the world after Houston, Texas.

STACK

The Indaver site at Beveren

looks a lot like many factories and its chimney stack is considerably less noticeable than those of its neighbours. A faint plume of off-white transparent smoke was coming from the chimney on the day the *Meath Chronicle* visited.

In the Indaver grounds and car park, there was no apparent smell of either smoke or rubbish and within the building itself there was a faint smell of rubbish, similar to what you get from a household bin.

The waste destined for the incinerator at Beveren is non-hazardous household waste that cannot be recycled or reused. It arrives at the site in grey plastic sacks in covered trucks that drive inside the plant before tipping their load.

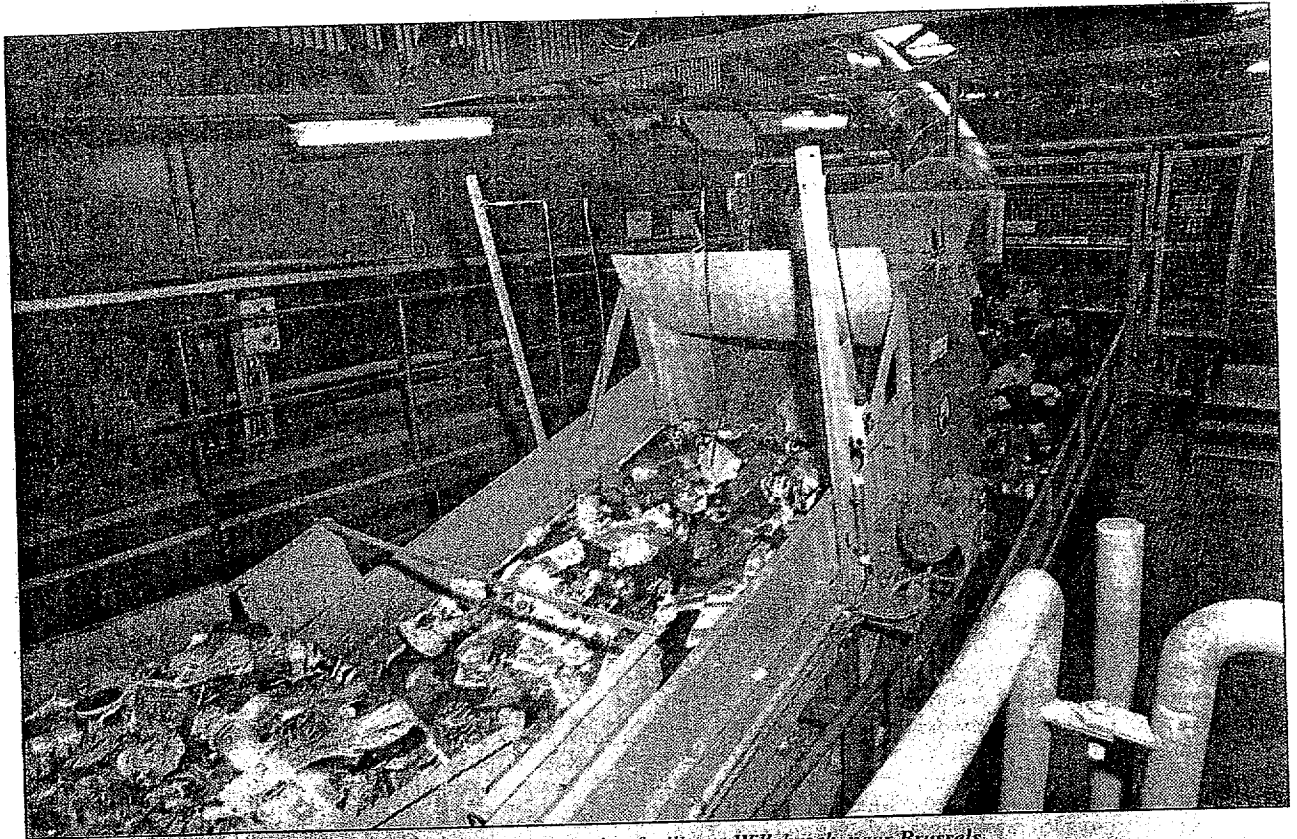
An operator using a giant mechanical claw spreads the waste over the bunker to mix it and fills the oven feeding chutes on top of the bunker.

The waste drops from the chutes onto push and feed tables, which spread it over the moving incineration grids. The waste is burned at temperatures of between 850°C and 1,100°C.

MONITORING

Operators in a computerised control centre regulate and monitor the incineration

Continued on page 4 Extra



Segregating domestic rubbish at the company's waste sorting facility at Willebroek, near Brussels.

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THE BURNING QUESTION

Continued from page 1 Extra

process and the purity of flue gases. Cameras allow them to see into the furnace. The rubbish remains in the furnace for an hour, slowly passing down through the moving grates.

The heat generated by the flue gases is fed into a boiler, which is integrated into the furnace and the steam created in the boiler is used to drive the generator turbines.

Meanwhile the waste is reduced to 25 per cent of its normal weight in ash. The ashes are washed, separated into different sizes and are used in the construction of motorways.

Indaver is looking for recovery options for the ash produced at Carranstown, but it may be necessary to landfill it initially.

Meanwhile the flue gases, having passed in a pipe through the steam boiler, proceed to the gas-washing installation.

NEUTRALISE

Water is added to cool the gases down to between 140° and 165°. Lime milk is used to neutralise the acidity of the flue gases and heavy metals and possible dioxin residues are removed by the injection of activated carbon. Finally all dust components are collected in filters and the clean gases pass out through the chimney stack.

Laura Burke, a chemical engineer with Indaver, points out that half of the incinerator plant is devoted to cleaning up. The plant is subject to continual monitoring and sampling. A piece of cloth covering the chimney stack is removed and replaced every two weeks and it is used to give an accurate measurement of what has

been emitted over the previous fortnight.

Laura Burke quotes Flanders regional government figures for emissions from the Beveren plant which show emissions of 0.01 nanograms per m³ per year. This is well below the EU permitted levels of 0.1 nanograms per m³. She says discharges from Carranstown would be similar.

DIOXIN LEVELS

She points out that this is well below the EU permitted dioxin levels and compares with the amount of dioxins released in Ireland each year by domestic traffic and heating. The proposals for Carranstown also include a waste-sorting plant which would service shops, hotels and restaurants and a community recycling plant.

The Meath Chronicle also visited an Indaver waste sorting plant at Willebroek, outside Brussels, where domestic rubbish is sorted by a series of mechanical processes before a final sorting by hand.

The waste for this process is from households and the bags contain mixed container waste such as cans, plastics and tetrapaks.

The plant also sorts and recovers tyres, some of which can be re-treaded, while others are shredded and used as energy sources. Carpets also are recycled at Willebroek.

Indaver operates an integrated waste management system in the Flanders region, which includes recycling, composting and incineration.

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Beveren, near Antwerp; (inset top right): Monitoring activity in the control room; (bottom right): waste being delivered by truck to the plant.

Plant 'Most Contentious Planning Application Ever'

A MAJOR protest rally against the proposed incinerator at Carranstown, Duleek, will be held in Drogheda on Saturday, 10th March.

According to the organisers, the No Incineration Alliance, the rally, which is expected to draw a huge crowd from all over Louth and Meath, will focus on rejecting incineration and super-dumps and will call for more

recycling of waste.

Meanwhile, more than 3,000 individual objections to the proposed incinerator at Carranstown, along with a 26,000-signature petition, have been lodged with Meath Co. Council, making it the most controversial planning application ever lodged in the north-east, according to Brian Hanrahan of the No Incineration Alliance.

He has called for a big turn-out at the rally and has particularly appealed to young people to assert their rejection of the proposals.

Last week a group of 10 representatives of community and environmental groups in the area travelled to Belgium where they visited Indaver's composting and recycling plants as well as its municipal waste incinerator

at Beveren, outside Antwerp.

Chris Searles, Duleek, a member of the No Incineration Alliance, commented that the recycling plants were exactly what was needed in Ireland to solve the spiralling waste problem.

Drogheda resident Michael McKeon, another member of the alliance, said the Belgian incinerator towers over a barren

industrial landscape. It is in the middle of a vast industrial area characterised by heavy industries with chimney stacks, huge power pylons and chemical storage areas, is next door to a nuclear power plant and 10km from the nearest town.

He said it is totally out of context with the Boyne Valley area, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

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Campaign to stop Indaver project moves to Europe

THE campaign to stop the Indaver incinerator project moved to mainland Europe when 10 representatives of community and environmental groups from the North East travelled to the company's base in Belgium.

They visited composting and recycling plants, as well as Indaver's Municipal Waste Incinerator at Beveren, a heavily industrialised area located outside the city of Antwerp.

On Thursday, February 22, the group travelled out from Dublin, and during the morning visited a recycling plant at Willebroek. Here, glass and plastic bottles, cans and other recyclable material is separated for processing elsewhere.

This plant also deals with other recyclables, including wood, tyres and paper, and serves several hundred thousand people in the locality.

Later, the group visited a composting plant at Grimbergen, located between Brussels and Antwerp.

Chris Searles (Duleek), one of three members of the No Incineration Alliance, who travelled to Belgium noted that these facilities were exactly the type of solution required to solve Ireland's spiraling waste problem.

Recycling and composting will dramatically reduce the volume of waste going into domestic refuse bins.

The shame is that the enthusiasm of the general public in wanting to embrace recycling and composting is not being matched by the Department of the Environment and the local authorities.

It's ridiculous for example that a town the size of Drogheda doesn't have a proper civic amenity. In towns like Dundalk

and Navan, local people have given these facilities phenomenal support.

If Noel Dempsey claims there's a waste crisis, then why do the people of Drogheda have to wait until 2004 to have such a centre operational?

'Recycling and composting facilities are much safer, cheaper and faster to commission than incinerators, so why must we wait and be the laughing stock of Europe when it comes to managing waste and caring for our much vaunted 'green' image and environment,' said Chris Searles.

Michael McKeon, another member of the Alliance, described his first impressions of the incineration plant.

After we left Antwerp, we travelled quite a distance through a vast industrial area, characterised by heavy industries

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with chimney stacks, chemical storage areas and huge power pylons. Amidst this, we arrived at the Indaver plant.

I was quite unprepared for the scale of the plant, which towers over a very barren, industrial landscape.

We soon learned that the plant next door was in fact a nuclear power plant. We also learned that the nearest town was 10km away and there was no sign of animals or crops in the entire area.

Indeed another member of the party remarked how unusual it was that there wasn't even a bird to be seen scavenging, an eerie feeling.

It made me worry is this what some people see as the future of Drogheda and East Meath it was so out of context for provincial Ireland, and especially for the Boyne Valley area, laden with archeological gems such as

Newgrange which UNESCO list as a world heritage site, as well as the wide catchment area of the historical Battle of the Boyne.

The nuclear power plant produces 3000mw of power by comparison, the so called WTE (Waste to Energy) incinerator plant only produces approximately 20Mw of power.

'So incineration can hardly be regarded as an efficient way to generate power, especially when you add in the risks posed by the by-products of incineration: toxic ash and emissions such as dioxin,' he concluded.

'Both prior to and during our trip to Belgium, we made contact with a number of community and environmental groups to assess the Belgian situation,' said Brian Hanratty, Chairman of the Alliance.

'These contacts have proved invaluable.'

'We also learned about Indaver's 25% stake in the controversial Drogenbos incinerator project near Brussels, which has met with massive public opposition, as well as legal and other objections being taken against other incinerators.

'Clearly, the Belgian people's opposition to incineration is driven by their bad experience of incinerators and that's a risk we in Ireland can avoid by opposing and defeating the Indaver planning application.

'Belgium rates very poorly in the Environmental Sustainability Index published recently worse than some East European countries, and with recent memories of how dioxin decimated their food industries, it certainly is no model to inspire Ireland,' he said.

Mr. Hanratty went on to reveal that up to 3,000 individual

objections to the proposed incinerator had been lodged with Meath Co. Council, along with a petition of 26,000 signatures.

'This must make it the most controversial planning application ever lodged in the North East,' he said.

With limited time left to object, he encouraged all individuals, businesses and organisations to promptly lodge their particular concerns with Meath Co. Council, quoting the planning reference 01/4014.

A special guidance leaflet is being distributed in several areas of Meath and Louth and this can also be obtained by sending a stamped, addressed envelope to NO INCINERATION, PO. Box 2001, Drogheda without delay.

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'Reject this incinerator and put in more viable alternatives' - plea

Dear Editor,

I refer to the articles published in last week's Drogheda Independent concerning Indaver's proposed incinerator at Platin and Meath County Councils' visit to Belgium to inspect similar facilities there. I note one of your reports was also invited by Indaver to visit Belgium. It is unfortunate that he did not undertake some investigative journalism in the interests of your readers, rather than reproduce information supplied by a company whose aim is to make profit from our waste. Had he bothered, he would have learned that in Belgium there is huge public opposition to incinerators. I know this because I have lived there for the last eight years. A successful campaign was led by four pressure groups to prevent an incinerator being built in Drogenbos on the outskirts of Brussels. The Belgian people fought and last year won this

Letter to the Editor

campaign for the following reasons:

- Incinerators do not make waste disappear, they actually create more toxic waste and through this pose a significant threat to public health and the environment. Incinerators do not reduce the need for landfill. Incinerator ashes, contaminated with heavy metals, unburned chemicals and entirely new chemicals formed during the burning process, are buried in landfill or dumped in the environment.

- Incineration creates dioxins, among the most poisonous man-made chemicals, which cause increased cancer rates, male and female reproductive problems, suppression of the immune

system, organ toxicity, respiratory ailments and a wide range of effects on hormones.

- Incineration relies on the continued generation of waste to support the high operating costs. Pressure to pay back the high cost of building incinerators perpetuates the generation of waste and removes the incentive to recycle and reuse.

- Along with dioxins, incinerators also produce high levels of soot or carbon monoxide. If you take an average 200,000-250,000 tonne per year incinerator, the particulate emissions from the chimney are around 100 kilos per day. That is equivalent to 1.7 million diesel vehicles travelling down a road every hour.

There are alternatives to incineration and one very good one is anaerobic digestion/composting. The delegation from Co. Meath was shown one such facility in

Belgium, but why, because this is NOT part of Indaver's plan for Platin. Indaver states that it will burn 150,000 tons and recycle 20,000 tons but this is only recycling 12% of waste. According to a study carried out by Greenpeace in Majorca, Spain in 1995, an analysis of recycling potential including composting found that 72.8% of waste reclamation was possible. It has also been shown that more jobs are created in the recycling process.

Indaver says its incinerator will produce energy but the cost of an average incinerator, £60m, would buy around five million low-energy bulbs which would save about one billion kWh of electricity equal to the energy production of an average incinerator over 15 years. If the aim is to produce power, there are other options with lesser environmental impacts, and an equal or smaller capital cost e.g. wind, micro-hydro, and wave/tidal devices.

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Indaver says that some of the ash will be used in building roads. According to Greenpeace ash from a municipal waste incinerator in Newcastle, UK, was used on local allotments and paths between 1994 and 1999. All of it had to be removed recently after it was found to contain unacceptably high levels of some heavy metals and dioxins.

An EU Directive approved just last week aims to limit the emissions from incinerators, therefore recognising that these very emissions are harmful to health and the environment.

To find out about their devastating effects an incinerator would have on our environment and future generations and to learn about the alternatives consult these websites and their links:

www.greenpeace.org

www.foe.co.uk

www.gn.apc.org

Our waste should not produce profits for a commercial enterprise!

Our waste should not pollute our environment through emissions!

Our waste should not affect the health of our children and future generations!

Our waste should be dealt with in a way that causes minimum damage to our environment!

Our public representatives have an obligation to themselves, their children, their families, their neighbours, their work colleagues, their students, their communities and their future generations to reject this incinerator and use their authority to put in place sustainable viable alternatives.

Yours etc,

Kevin Smyth,

'The Swallows', Dublin
Road, Drogheda

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Client: Waste

Date: 12-12-00

Incinerator: DI reporter responds

Dear Sir,

In relation to Mr. Kevin Smyth's comments in last week's edition (Page 2), of course Indaver wants to make a profit from our waste - it would not be in business otherwise.

Mr. Smyth also assumes that in my reporting of Indaver's operations in Belgium, I simply reproduced information supplied by the company, which is incorrect.

On several occasions company bosses were questioned by me, and others, about the details of their waste management plans for Carranstown, and the impact those plans could have on human life and the environment in this region.

Such was the nature of the visit, that we did not have sufficient time to

gauge the views of many locals on the incineration issue, and I do accept that opposition exists in Belgium, and in many countries where incineration is chosen as a method of waste management.

But regardless of how about this emotive issue, transparency must prevail at all stages of the debate.

So too should acceptance of the fact that companies like Indaver have the freedom and the right to outline their plans, proposals and evidence to the public, however disagreeable they may be to some people.

Niall Moonan,
Newsroom,
Drogheda Independent

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Monday,
July 29, 2002

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THE IRISH TIMES

Ireland

Ban on three trace elements in cattle feed over dioxin fears

By Sean Mac Connell, Agriculture Correspondent

The Department of Agriculture last night banned the use of three trace elements in food for cattle as it awaits the results of dioxin tests on a tonne of pre-mix material.

The banned substances are carbosan copper, addarome cattle '97 and manganese oxide, in which preliminary testing revealed traces of dioxins.

Dioxins are potentially lethal if ingested in food and can build up in the body, causing cancers and other major health problems.

The Department yesterday said it believed the source of the contamination was in a batch of imported feed ingredients from the United States.

It seized the consignment and sent samples away for analysis, which is expected to take seven to 10 days.

It also advised the 10 other companies involved in pre-mixing for the feed industry not to use the three elements.

However, it said that any material already made up or on farms could be used because the existing testing regime would have identified any problems.

"The last batch was tested a month ago and found to be clear, so all feed or pre-mix made before then can be used," said a Department spokesman last night. He said all actions taken by the Department were purely precautionary.

"The quantities of these ingredients used in compounded animal feed are minute and are very unlikely to cause any problems.

"We are talking about one nanogram per kilogram and these are very, very minute quantities we're talking about," he said.

The spokesman added that officials were satisfied that the Department now had possession of all of what is believed to be the dioxin-contaminated pre-mix material.

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"We do not believe that any of the other pre-mix companies have imported material from the same source but nevertheless we have told them not to use any of the three elements involved in their product until this matter is resolved," he said.

He said the last batch containing the three suspect elements had been tested for dioxins a month ago and the Department was satisfied that there was no contamination then.




"For that reason there is no necessity to impose a ban on feed already made up but if necessary we will do so," he said.

He confirmed that the Department had informed the European Commission's alert system about the potential difficulty and was in contact with Brussels.

The Irish Commissioner, Mr David Byrne, who has responsibility for health and consumer protection, last year placed animal feed in the Rapid Alert System, which was set up as a result of a dioxin scare in Belgium.

This scare cost the Belgian food industry millions of euro when contaminated milk entered the food chain.

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