Going Green for St. Patrick's Day - Brewing Up Sustainability

How Two Vermont Craft Beverage Makers are Leading the Sustainability Charge in Vermont

Black Flannel Team: From L to R: Chris Kesler, Founder, and owner of Black Flannel Brewing and Distilling, Christian Kruse, Executive Chef & 2022 James Beard Award Semifinalist for Best Chef Northeast, Dan Sartwell Head of Brewing Operations at Black Flannel.(Photo by

SALISBURY, VT, USA, March 16, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Vermont has always been at the forefront of sustainability initiatives, and the craft beverage movement is no exception. Our favorite spots for a quick nip are thinking more and more about what they can do to make a change to be sustainable, reduce their CO2 emissions, recycle or repurpose their materials, and dispose of their spent waste in a way that is good for the environment and our community. There's no better time to talk about "going green" than on St. Patrick's Day, and we want to say Sláinte to our sustainable partners making good brews and ciders while doing just that.

Vanguard Renewables works with Black Flannel Brewing and Distilling and Shacksbury Cider (just to name a few) to recycle their organic waste. They collaborate with those partners to keep their waste from being dumped down the drain by collecting their spent grains and other byproducts. Instead of discarding their waste, these craft beverage makers are not just cutting their CO2 emissions but also helping keep the region's family farmers in business.

Dan Sartwell, Head of Brewing Operations at Black Flannel Brewing and Distillery, said: "We pride ourselves on being as sustainable as possible, even from the design of our brewery. Every piece of equipment is the highest energy efficient rating we could get, and we also plan our brewing process to run efficiently to help our energy consumption. Additionally, we don't just recycle our organic waste, but we also recycle our Pak Tech beer toppers. If you notice, Black Flannel doesn't have one color, but we use whatever gets returned that we can recycle and reuse. Since we started that program in October of last year, we have

recycled and reused around 6,000 toppers to date."

Colin Davis, Co-Founder, Shacksbury Cider, harvesting wild apples. (Photo by Michael Tallman)

Vanguard Renewables Logo

"We have been working with small and large beverage producers across Vermont to advance the Farm Powered mission of turning food waste and dairy cow manure into renewable energy," said Neil H. Smith, CEO, Vanguard Renewables. "We provide a circular solution for these companies - from farm to kettle to keg or barrels, and back to one of New England's family farms to help create pipeline-quality renewable natural gas to power farms and businesses, colleges, and towns across the region."

Colin Davis, Co-Founder at Shacksbury Cider, said: "Working with Vanguard Renewables is part of a sustainability push we started in 2020 that has culminated in our USDA Organic certification early this year. The decision to divert part of our waste stream to Vanguard was an easy one; it spares our local wastewater facility and creates energy out of waste. As a bunch of fermentation nerds and engineers, we love the idea of microbes turning our waste into energy!"

The waste from Vanguard's partner breweries is collected and brought to one of their six anaerobic digestion facilities in Vermont and Massachusetts, where it's then added to a state-of-the-art hydrolyzer before entering the anaerobic digestion process to create renewable energy. Smith continued: "The waste byproducts from our brewery partners not only help to produce renewable natural gas, but the byproducts of the anaerobic digestion process makes a low-carbon and nearly odorless liquid fertilizer to use on their fields."

Smith continued: "As one of the nation's leading renewable energy companies, Vanguard Renewables is excited to see the commitment that so many beverage companies across New England have taken to fight the good fight to become better stewards of our natural resources and the work they are doing to reach their own ambitious sustainability goals."

Vanguard Renewables' beverage partners are not just doing good for the environment, but they are helping the region's family farmers save money on fertilizers, energy, and bedding. It's a win for all.

Sartwell continued, “When we had to decide on how we were going to dispose of our waste - the decision to partner with Vanguard to make renewable energy just made sense. It can be expensive to sidestream your waste, but it’s a lot cheaper than having that waste ruin your septic system or end up in our waterways and landfills.”

The Vermont Brewers Association, of which Sartwell serves on the sustainability committee, is working to help their brewers recycle as much as possible. In addition to their Pak Tech program, where they have recycled nearly 20,000 toppers, they work to help members recycle their grain bags. Most grains come to smaller breweries in 50-55 pound bags and can’t be recycled at the local recycling center. Members gather their empty grain bags, and they get sold to a company that makes composite decking.

Going green for Vanguard's partners doesn’t just happen once a year, but it’s a commitment all 365 days of them.

About Vanguard Renewables:
Vanguard Renewables is a national leader in developing food and dairy waste-to-renewable energy projects. The Company is committed to advancing decarbonization by reducing greenhouse gas emissions from farms and food waste and supporting regenerative agriculture on partner farms. Vanguard co-founded the industry-leading Farm Powered Strategic Alliance (FPSA) alongside food industry leaders Dairy Farmers of America, Unilever, and Starbucks to develop a circular solution for food waste reduction and recycling and decarbonization of manufacturing and the supply chain. The Company owns and operates six on-farm anaerobic digester facilities in the northeast and plans to expand to more than 100 sites nationwide by 2025. Established relationships and renewable natural gas offtake agreements with national utilities including Dominion Energy, Enbridge, ONE Gas, National Grid, and Eversource, and its strategic alliance with Dairy Farmers of America, position the Company to significantly increase U.S. production and delivery of renewable natural gas to commercial and residential customers across the country. To learn more about Vanguard Renewables, Farm Powered organic waste solutions, the FPSA and its members, and Vanguard’s numerous awards and recognitions, visit the website.

Vanguard Renewables Media Room:
https://vanguardrenewables.com/vanguard-renewables-media-room

Billy Kepner
Vanguard Renewables
+1 781-371-4935
email us here

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