

**For immediate release**

## **Test Run of New Biomass Power Plant Running Full Speed Ahead**

- **Complex fine-tuning of 70-million-euro project in progress**
- **Optimal settings for boiler system, incoming fuel, and fuel treatment in process of being determined**
- **Sound insulation measures taken in close consultation with residents**

**Oberkirch, Germany, 12/09/2024** – The Koehler Group is extensively investing in the expansion and conversion of its combined heat and power plant in Oberkirch in order to use environmentally friendly biomass as fuel in the future. The large-scale project hit a milestone in June of this year when the last piece of coal was fired. The boiler was then fired with biomass for the first time ever on August 20th, after which a test run with extensive fine-tuning kicked off. As a result of the switch to biomass, more than 150,000 metric tons of direct fossil CO<sub>2</sub> emissions will be cut per year at the Oberkirch site.

### **Complex fine-tuning as part of test run**

Once initial firing adjustments were made and the boiler system's steam output was gradually increased, the steam turbine and its generator went online on August 30th as scheduled. This first synchronization run was the first time ever that power was fed into the public electricity grid in what is referred to as "grid-connected mode." The power generation system had been running in island mode previously, meaning that the corresponding electricity was only used to power Koehler's own electrical systems.

Since then, the power delivered by the converted power plant has been ratcheted up as part of the test run. All three incoming fuel areas, together with the corresponding fuel treatment and conveyance systems and four fuel silos, are now operating normally, and the converted power plant is generating around 12 MW of green power.

### **Measures for reducing noise emissions taken in close consultation with residents**

The size of the investment, coming in at over 70 million euros, is representative of just how large and complex the process of converting the former coal-fired power plant has been. Part of that is the fact that the process requires an extensive test run in order to be able to get the optimum settings for operation.

One of the focal points of the aforementioned test run is reducing noise emissions. To this effect, an extremely broad variety of measures revolving around the biomass power plant have already been taken in consultation with the area's residents. For example, an access hatch in the boiler house's envelope has been closed, and a large number of operating parameters have been fine-tuned. In addition, planned noise barriers have now been installed. Hartmut Felsch, the mill director at the Koehler Paper plant in Oberkirch, had the following to say: "We've arranged for third-party noise control experts to work with us throughout

**Koehler Holding SE & Co. KG**

Hauptstraße 2 · 77704 Oberkirch · Germany · Phone +49 7802 81-0 · Fax +49 7802 81-4330 · [www.koehler.com](http://www.koehler.com)  
Sitz: D-77704 Oberkirch · Amtsgericht Freiburg i. Br. · HRA 490392

the entire commissioning and optimization process, which is really important as far as we're concerned. These experts are helping us identify objectionable sources of noise and take measures to fix them as appropriate." In addition, the company is constantly discussing things with residents during the test run so as to be able to quickly respond to changes in how they perceive any noise. At the same time, other remaining work is also in the home stretch. "Above all, we'll be fixing up the grounds and restoring the public swimming pool parking lot in the coming weeks," Felsch adds. Final acceptance testing for the new biomass power plant by TÜV is expected to take place at the beginning of the second quarter of 2025.



*Figure: Right in the home stretch – the conversion work on the Koehler Group combined heat and power plant in Oberkirch.*

*Source: Koehler Group*



### **2030 Sustainability Strategy**

*With its Climate Strategy, the Koehler Group is helping achieve sustainable development goals in the area of climate and environmental protection. The Climate Strategy sets out how the company plans to fully replace fossil fuels with renewable energy.*

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## About the Koehler Group

The Koehler Group was founded in 1807 and has been family-run from that moment to the present day. The group's core business activity lies in the development and production of high-quality specialty paper. This includes—among others—thermal paper, playing card board, beverage coasters, fine paper, carbon-less paper, recycled paper, decor paper, wood pulp board, sublimation paper, and also innovative specialty paper for the packaging industry. In Germany, the Koehler Group employs around 2,500 people across five production sites, with three additional sites in the USA. The group operates internationally, with an export share of around 70% in 2023, and brings in an annual turnover of around 1.1 billion euros.

As an energy-intensive company, Koehler invests in renewable energy projects such as wind energy, hydropower, photovoltaics, and biomass with its Koehler Renewable Energy business unit. The Koehler Group has set a goal of producing more energy from renewable sources by 2030 than is required for its paper production operations.

With its Koehler Innovative Solutions division, the Koehler Group is collaborating with start-ups to promote innovations in the core business segments “paper” and “renewable energy”.

Find more information at: <https://www.koehler.com>

## Your contact person:

Alexander M. Stöckle

Koehler Group press contact

Phone: +49 7802 81-4749

E-mail: [alexander.stoeckle@koehler.com](mailto:alexander.stoeckle@koehler.com)

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