Section: BIOPOWER
Biomass Power Technology Fuel Specifications and Capacity Range

Biomass Conversion Technology	Commonly used fuel types[a]	Particle Size Requirements	Moisture Content Requirements (wet basis)[b]	Average capacity range / link to examples
Stove/Furnace	Solid wood, pressed logs, wood chips and pellets	Limited by stove size and opening	10 – 30%	15 kWt to ?
Pile burners	Virtually any kind of wood residues[c] or agricultural residues[d] except wood flour	Limited by grate size and feed opening	< 65%	4 to 110 MWe
Pile burner fed with underfire stoker (biomass fed by auger below bed)	Sawdust, non-stringy bark, shavings, chips, hog fuel	0.25-2 in (6-38 mm)	10-30%	4 to 110 MWe
Stoker grate boilers	Sawdust, non-stringy bark, shavings, end cuts, chips, chip rejects, hog fuel	0.25 – 2 in (6 -50 mm)	10-50% (keep within 10% of design rate)	20 to 300 MWe many in 20 to 50 MWe range
Suspension boilers Cyclonic	Sawdust. Non-stringy bark, shavings, flour, sander dust	0.25 in (6 mm) max	< 15%	many < 30 MWe
Suspension boilers, Air spreader-stoker	Wood flour, sander dust, and processed sawdust, shavings	0.04 in -0.06 in (1-1.6 mm)	< 20%	1.5 MWe to 30 MWe
Fluidized-bed combustor (FB- bubbling or CFB-circulating)	Low alkali content fuels, mostly wood residues or peat no flour or stringy materials	< 2 in (<50 mm)	< 60%	Many at 20 to 25 MWe, up to 300 Example
Co-firing: pulverized coal boiler	Sawdust, non-stringy bark, shavings, flour, sander dust	<0.25 in (<6 mm)	< 25%	Up to 1500 MWee Example
Co-firing: cyclones	Sawdust, non-stringy bark, shavings, flour, sander dust	<0.5 in (<12 mm)	10 – 50%	40 to 1150 MWee Example
Co-firing: stokers, fluidized bed	Sawdust, non-stringy bark, shavings, flour, hog fuel	< 3 in (<72 mm)	10 – 50%	MWee Example
Counter current, fixed bed (updraft) atmospheric	Chipped wood or hog fuel, rice hulls, dried sewage sludge	0.25 – 4 in (6 – 100 mm)	< 20%	5 to 90 MWt, + up to 12 Mwe
Downdraft, moving bed atmospheric gasifier	Wood chips, pellets, wood scrapes, nut shells	< 2 in (<50 mm)	<15%	~ 25-100 kWe Example
Circulating fluidized bed (CFB), dual vessel, gasifier	Most wood and chipped agricultural residues but no flour or stringy materials	0.25 – 2 in (6 -50 mm)	15-50%	~ 5 to 10 Mwe
Fast pyrolysis	Variety of wood and agricultural resources	0.04-0.25 in (1-6 mm)	< 10%	~ 2.5 MWe Example 1 Example 2
Anerobic digesters	Animal manures & bedding, food processing residues, brewery by-products, other industry organic residues	NA	65 to 99.9% liquid depending on type, i.e., 0.1 to 35% solids	145 to 1700 x 103 kWhr/yr Example

Source:
Compiled by Lynn Wright, Oak Ridge, TN.

[a] Primary source for fuel types is: Badger, Phillip C. 2002. Processing Cost Analysis for Biomass Feedstocks. ORNL/TM-2002/199. Available at http://bioenergy.ornl.gov/main.aspx (search by title or author)

[b] Most primary biomass, as harvested, has a moisture content (MC) of 50 to 60% (by wet weight) while secondary or tertiary sources of biomass may be delivered at between 10 and 30%. A lower MC always improves efficiency and some technologies require low MC biomass to operate properly while others can handle a range of MC.

[c] Wood residues may include forest logging residues and storm damaged trees (hog fuel), primary mill residues (e.g., chipped bark and chip rejects), secondary mill residues (e.g., dry sawdust), urban wood residues such as construction and demolition debris, pallets and packaging materials, tree trimmings, urban land clearing debris, and other wood residue components of municipal solid waste (as wood chips).

[d] Agricultural residues may include straws and dried grasses, nut hulls, orchard trimmings, fruit pits, etc. Slagging may be more of a problem in some types of combustion units with high alkali straws and grasses, unless the boilers have been specially designed to handle these type fuels.

[e] The biomass component of a co-firing facility will usually be less than the equivalent of 50MWe.