

Japan: Panasonic's hydrogen station "H2 Kusatsu Farm" opens

The hydrogen facility is designed to verify the practicality of hydrogen energy using two methods, water electrolysis and gas reforming.

Panasonic Corporation has built the hydrogen station "H2 Kusatsu Farm" in Kusatsu City, Shiga Prefecture in order to verify the practicality of using hydrogen. The company started operation of fuel cell forklifts within the site with hydrogen supplied from the station.

The "H2 Kusatsu Farm" can supply hydrogen regardless of the weather by using two methods. The first one is to utilize water electrolysis unit that produces hydrogen by electrolyzing water using the power from solar panels. The other is to utilize compact hydrogen production equipment in combination with a gas reforming process with long and accumulated technology from "Ene-Farm", residential natural-gas type fuel cell.

This system is capable of producing hydrogen to operate approximately two fuel cell forklifts per day and they can be fully charged with approximately 3 minutes. Fuel cell forklifts will carry finished products at the "Ene-Farm" factory.

In 2009, Panasonic launched the world's first residential fuel cell called "Ene-Farm" in Japan that generates electricity and heat using hydrogen extracted from city natural gas. The company is now expanding its fuel cell business abroad to seven countries in Europe, including Germany and the United Kingdom.