Garbage in Garbage Out

Educating Stakeholders on how to Model and Interpret Landfill Biogas Results

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Methane to Markets Partnership Expo
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Carbon Trade Ltd

- Landfill methane projects (New Projects)
  - Site Assessments
  - Pre-feasibility studies including pump tests
  - Feasibility studies
  - Full detailed system design including EIA's
  - Financial modelling
  - Tender processes
  - Project & Construction Management
- Landfill methane (Existing Projects)
  - Training & Operation
  - Technical Assessment and Due Diligence
  - Trouble shooting

Carbon Trade Ltd

- Has studied more than 100 landfill sites in over 12 different countries
- Built more than 20 gas systems in the U.K.
- Designed and managed the construction of;
  - Simeprodeso 7.4MW LFGTE project, Monterrey, Mexico
  - Rio Azul 3.4MW LFGTE project, San Jose, Costa Rica
  - Harmandali 4MW LFGTE, Izmir, Turkey
  - 2 LFG projects in Guatemala City
  - Monterrey II 5.3MW (under development)
- Full project reference list is on our web site

The familiar equation

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Basic IPCC Gas model;

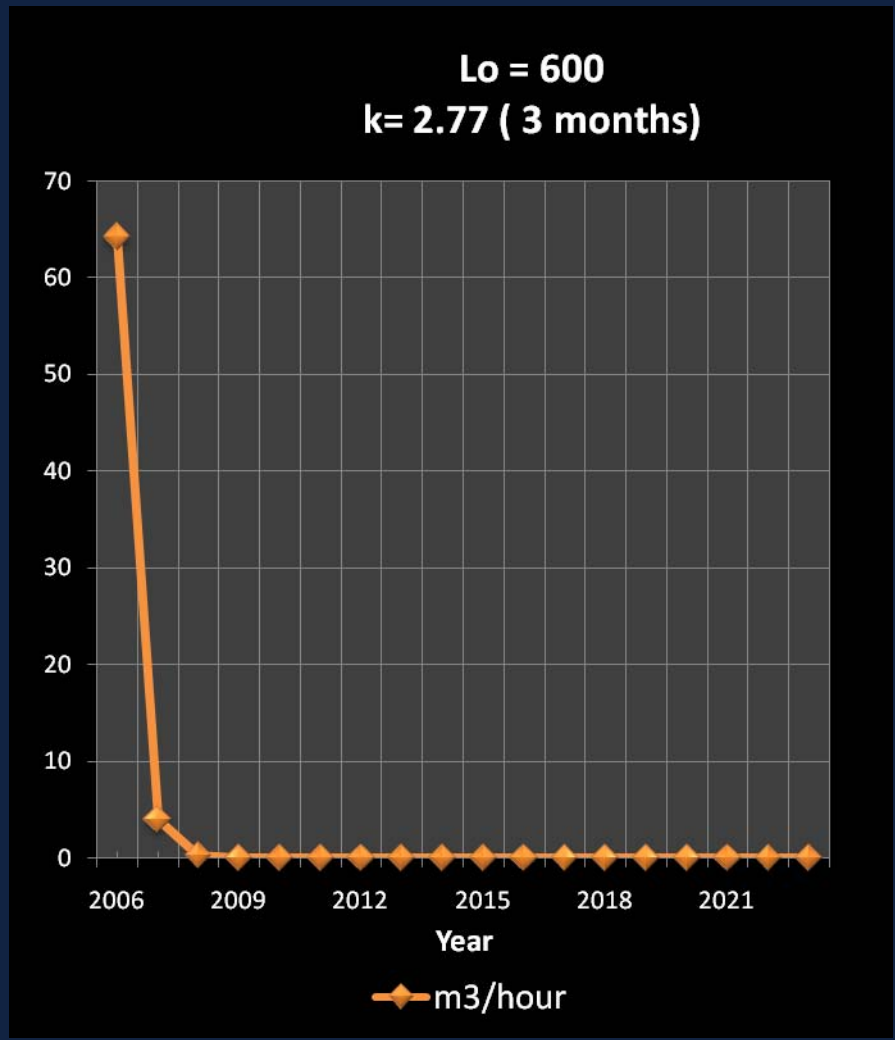
Annual Gas Production = $L_0 .M.(1- e^{-k})$

where:

- k = reaction rate constant ($Ln(2)/t_{1/2}$)
- L_0 = methane generation potential (m3/tonne)
- M = mass of degradable waste available

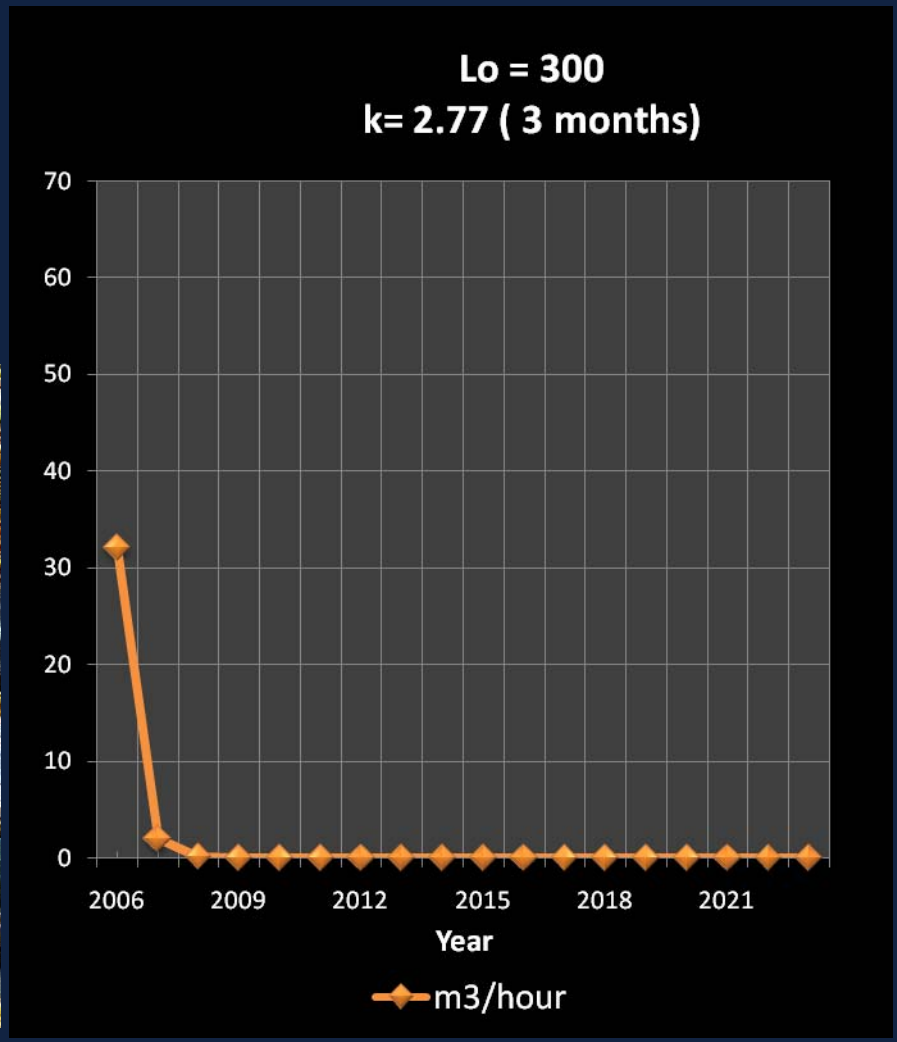
Exploring the variable - L_o

- Example
  - Perfectly degradable organic substrate
  - Perfect digester
  - Ideal conditions
- L_o = around 600m^3 / tonne Biogas
- Complete degradation in 3 months



Exploring the variable - L_o

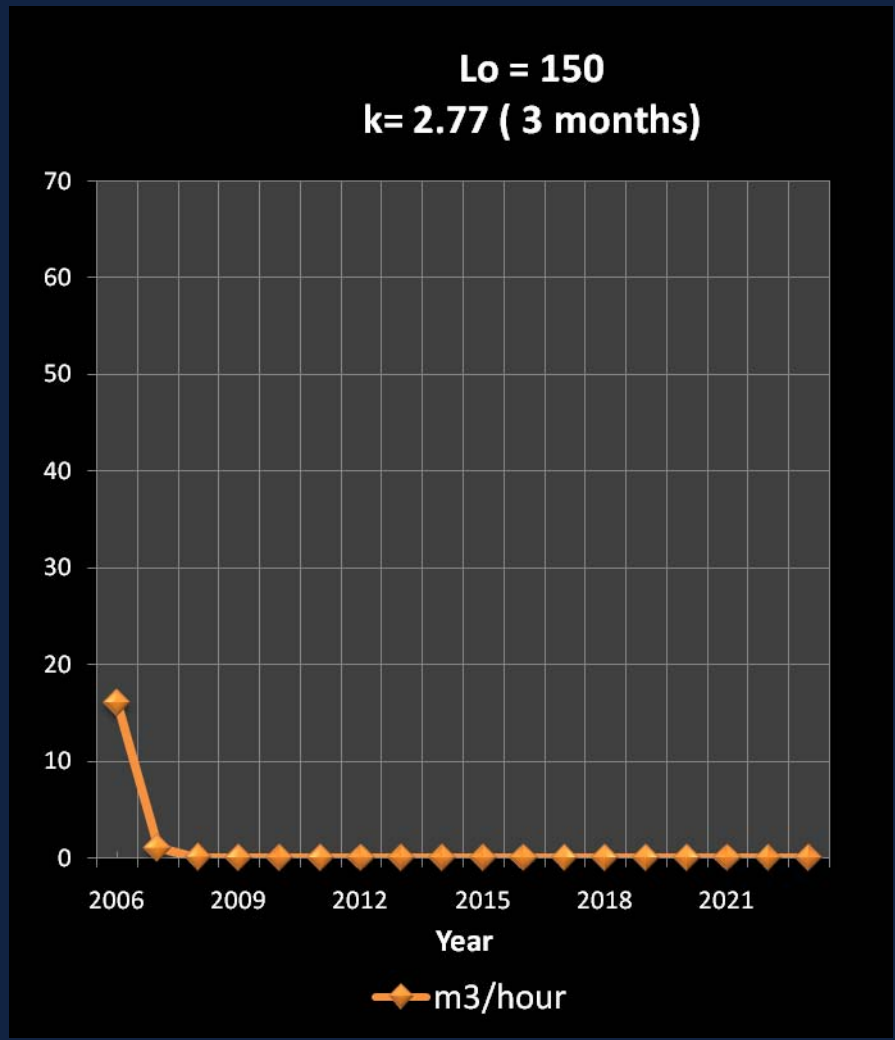
- But waste is not 100% degradable
- L_0 maybe 300m^3/tonne



Exploring the variable - L_o

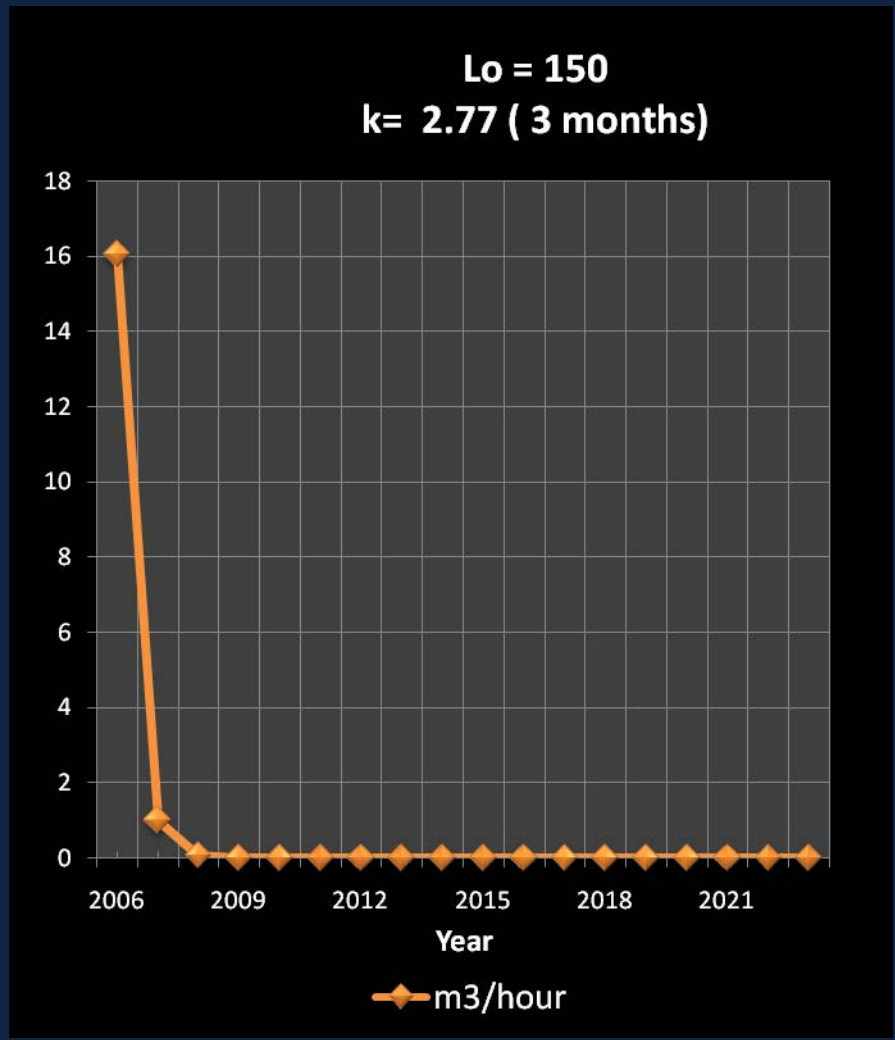
- But not all the organic material degrades
  - Particle size too big
  - Acid conditions
  - Isolated from bacteria
  - Chemical inhibitors

- Perhaps L_0 should be 150m^3/tonne



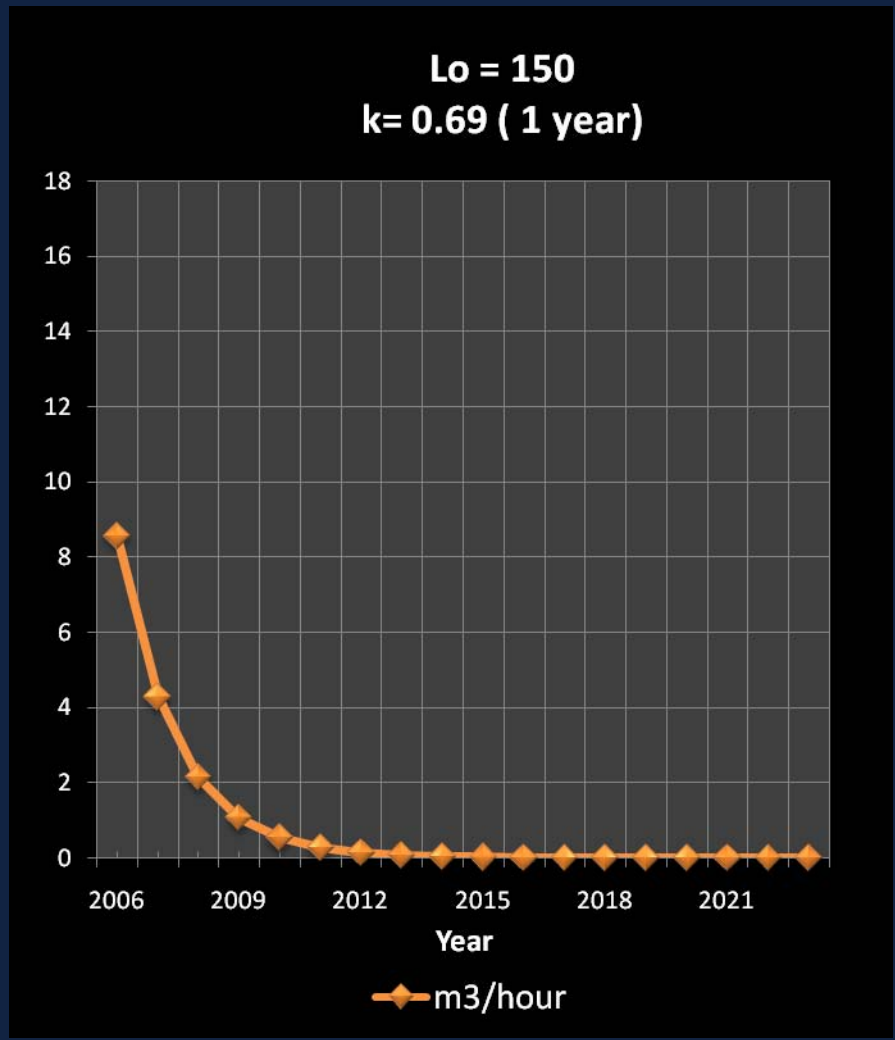
Exploring the variable - k

- In a perfect digester k is very high.
- In our example a half life of 3 months



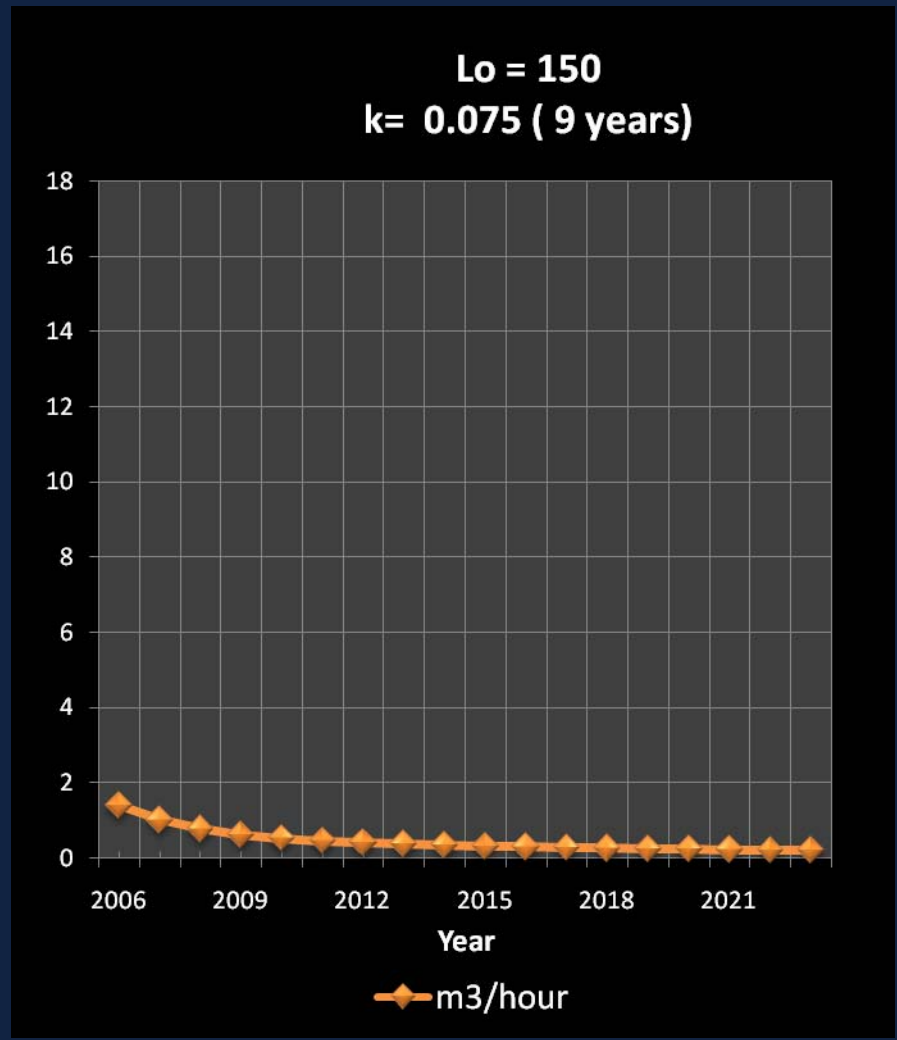
Exploring the variable - k

- In a perfect digester k is very high.
- In our example a half life of 3 months
- Landfill is NOT a perfect biodigester
- Perhaps half life = 1 year



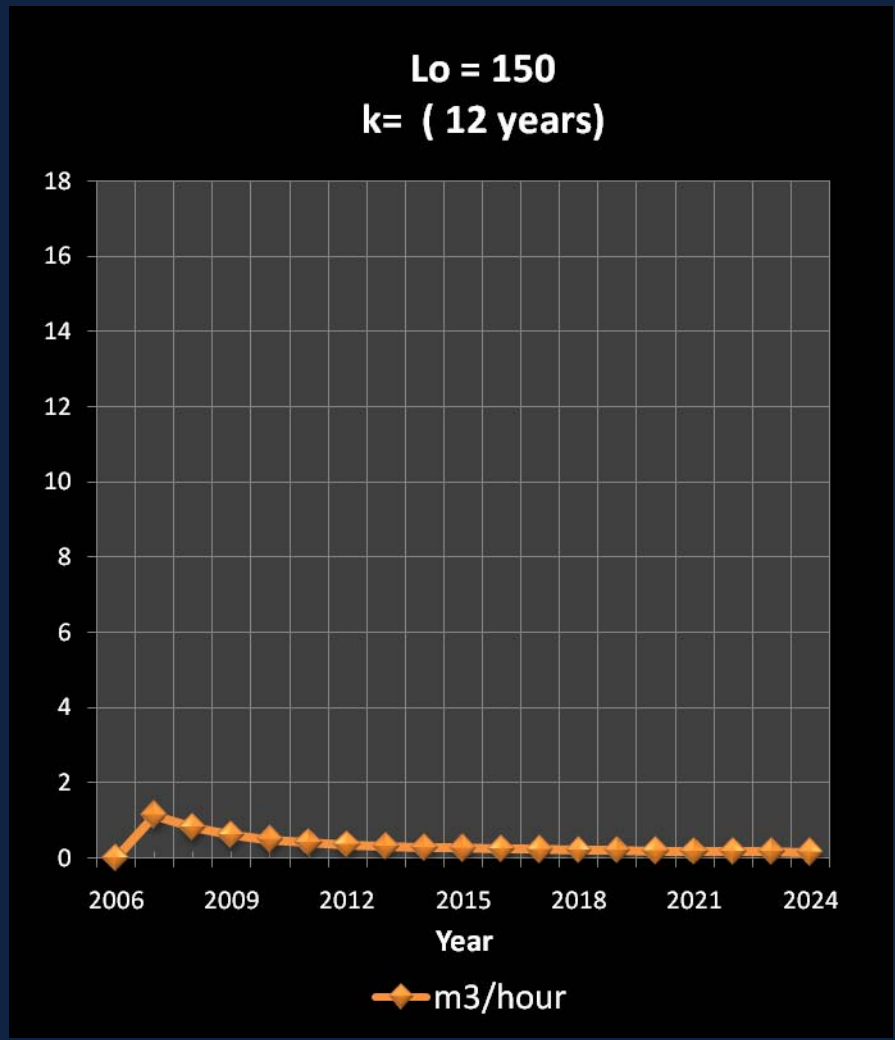
Exploring the variable - k

- BUT – all waste is not easily degraded
- Perhaps degradable waste is;
  - 10% Oils, fats & sugars – Rapid (Half life = 1 year?)
  - 10%Proteins, carbohydrates, starches – Moderate (Half life = 2 years?)
  - 30% Paper & Card, green waste – Slow (Half life = 10 years?)
  - 50% Others – very slow (Half Life = 50 years?)



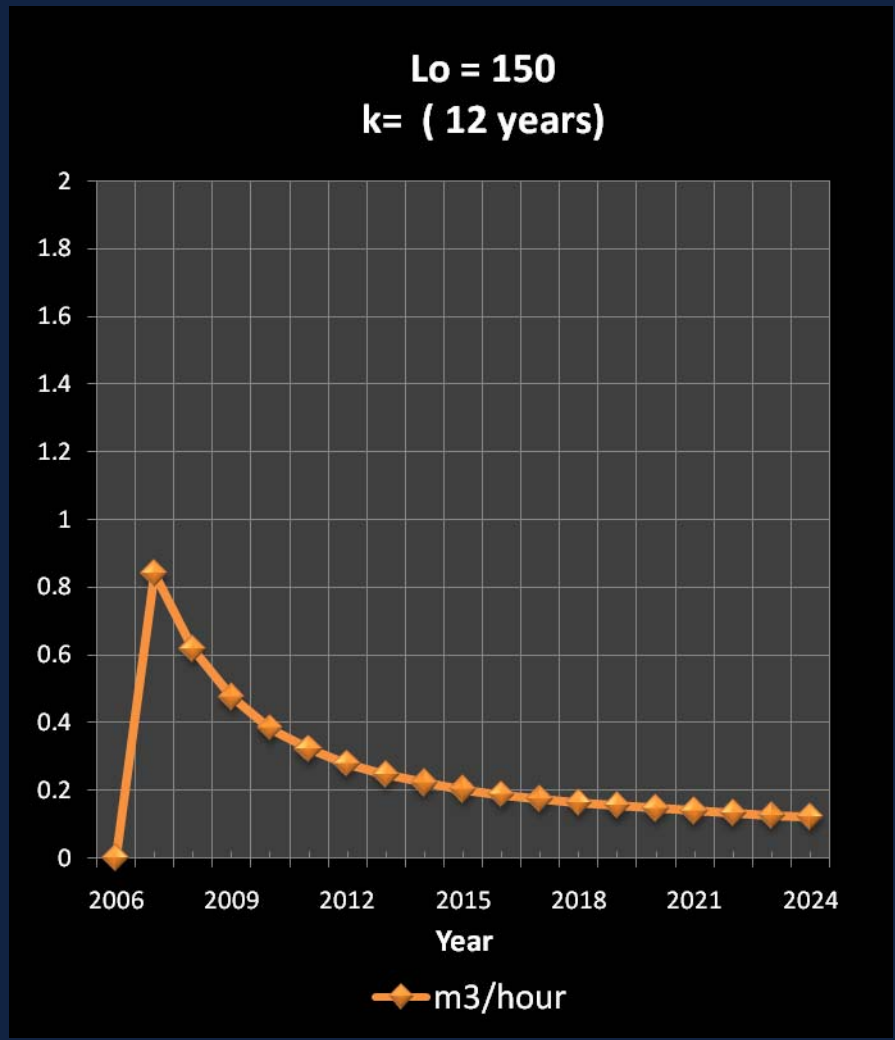
Exploring the variable - k

- But our 1,000 tonnes was deposited over 1 year!
- Maybe we should allow 6 months to reach full gas production



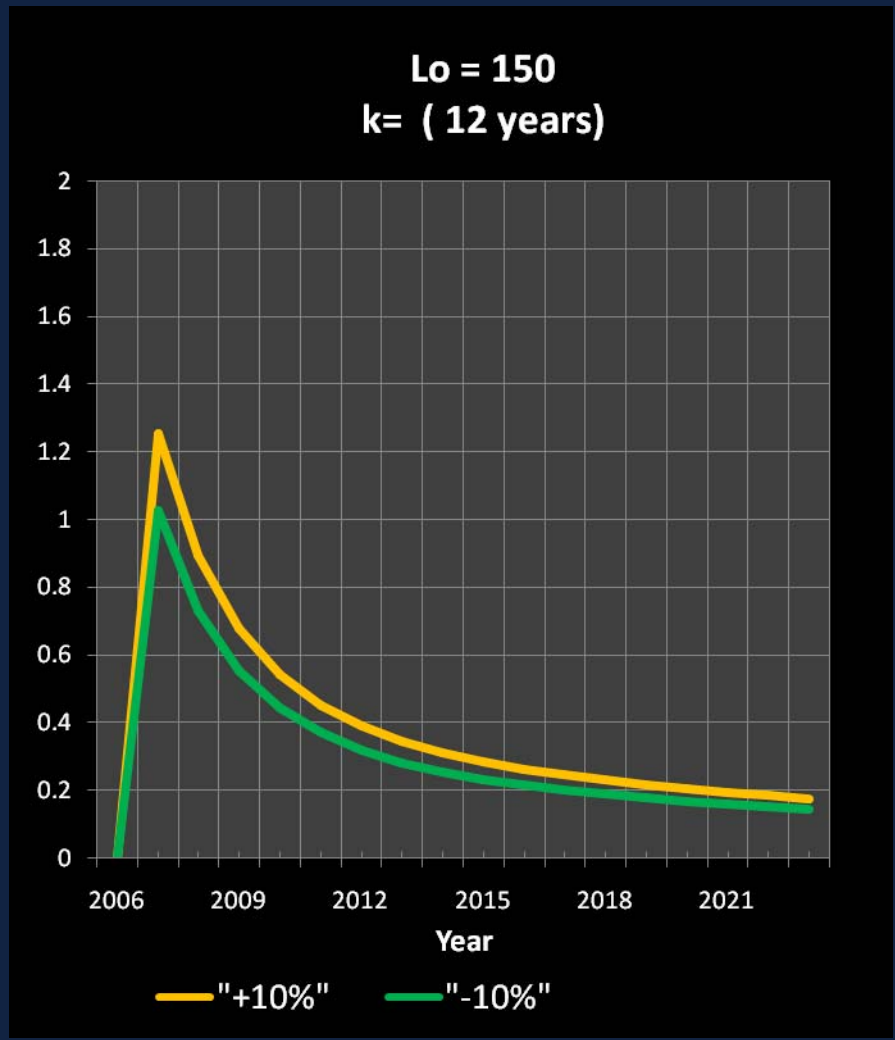
Are the numbers right?

- Perhaps the Mass is +- 10%



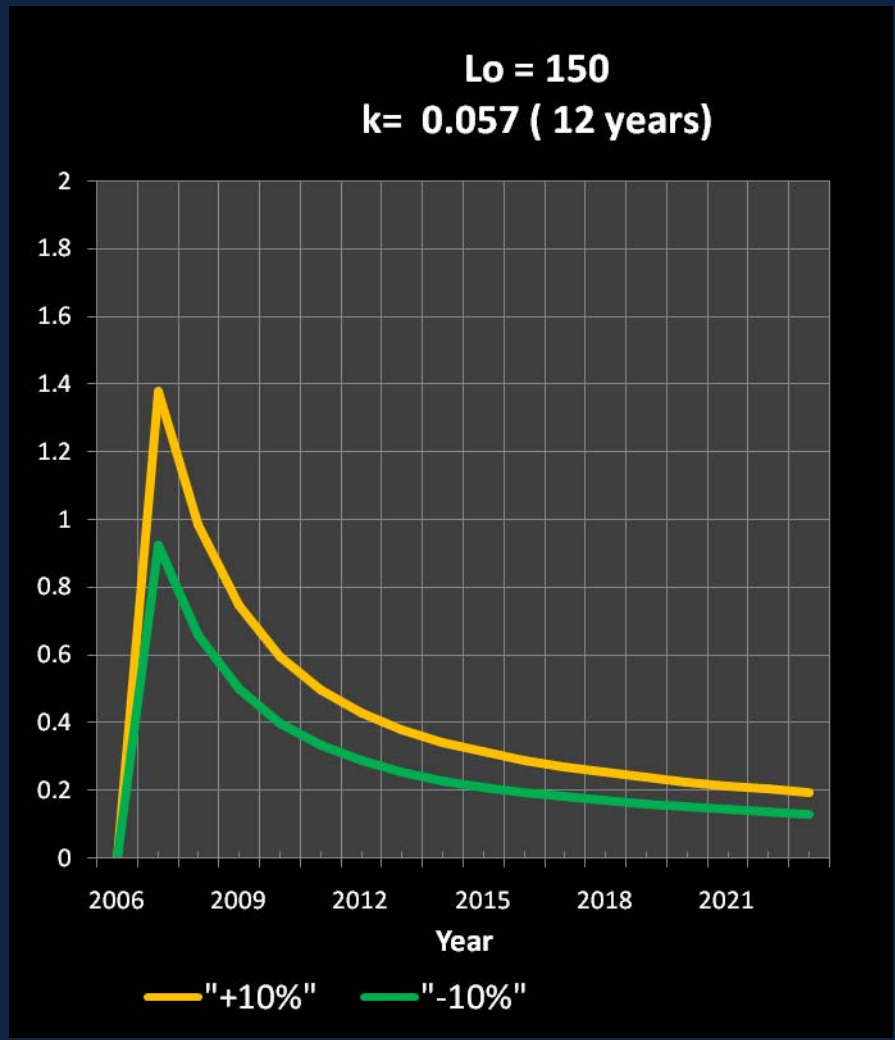
Are the numbers right?

- Perhaps the Mass is +-10%?
- Perhaps the L_0 is +-10%?



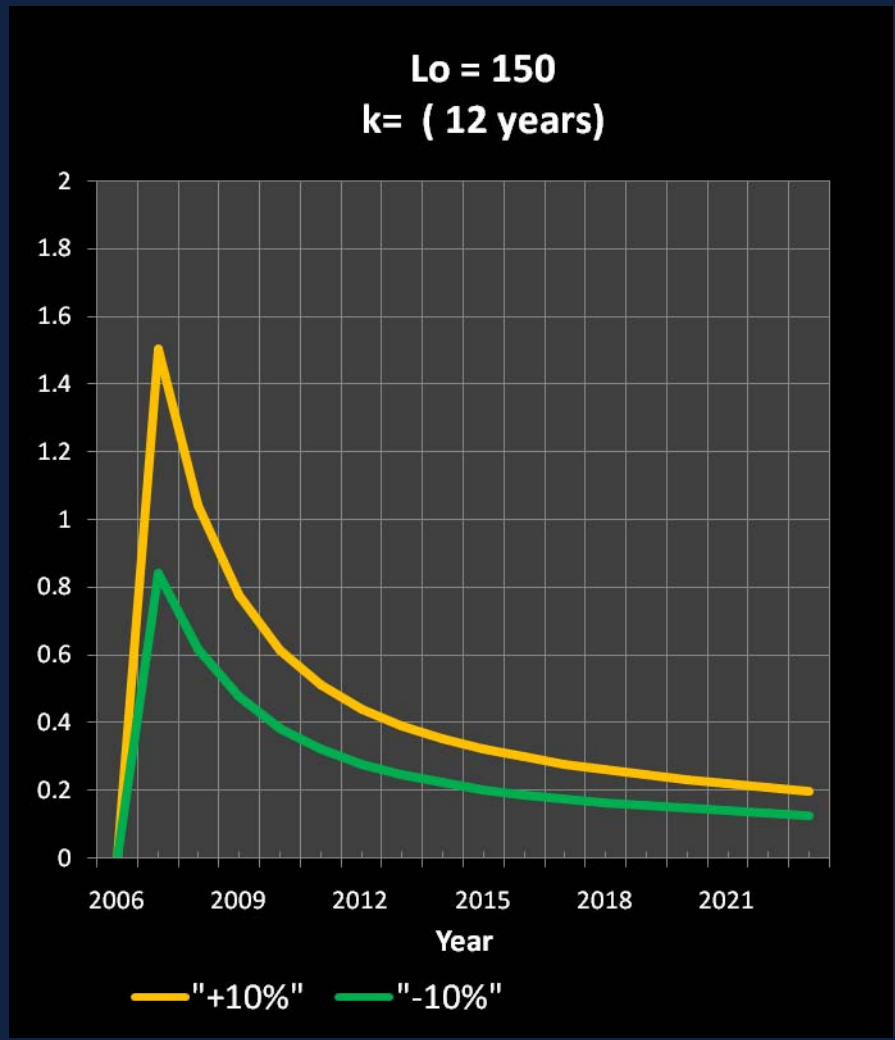
Are the numbers right?

- Perhaps the Mass is +-10%?
- Perhaps the L_0 is +-10%?
- Perhaps the k is +-10%



Are the variables right?

- Perhaps the mass is +-10%?
- Perhaps the L_0 is +-10%?
- Perhaps the k is +-10%
- Using reasonable assumptions throughout
- With a small error there is almost 100% difference in peak production



Other Waste Considerations

- Is there enough moisture in the waste?
  - Rainfall
  - Capping layer quality
- What is the waste temperature
  - Methanogenic bacteria need heat

Is there something missing?

- Our model indicates the possible ***baseline***
- But we have not yet visited the site!
- So what factors should we look at on the site?

Gas Recovery

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Basic IPCC Gas model;

Annual Gas Production = $L_0 .M.(1- e^{-k})$

Needs a collection efficiency factor;

Annual Gas Recovered= $\eta.L_0 .M.(1- e^{-k})$

Collection Efficiency

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A small factor with a BIG impact

Is the site full of leachate?

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Is the site full of leachate?

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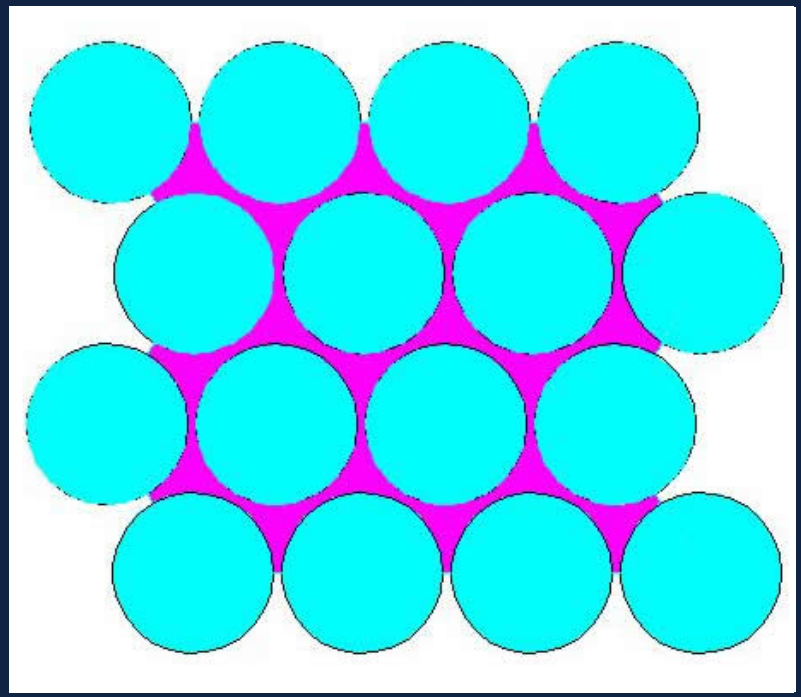
- High leachate levels affect the Radius of Influence (ROI) of extraction
- If ROI is estimated at 20m
- A 5% error reduces collection area by 10.7%



How long is the waste exposed?

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Are the gradients too steep?

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Or is the site too shallow?

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Are there site operations?

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And other factors?

- Air leakage
  - Is the applied vacuum limited by oxygen ingress
- Are all the gas wells performing normally
- APOLOGIES – I know the following slide is hard to read.

Field Measurements

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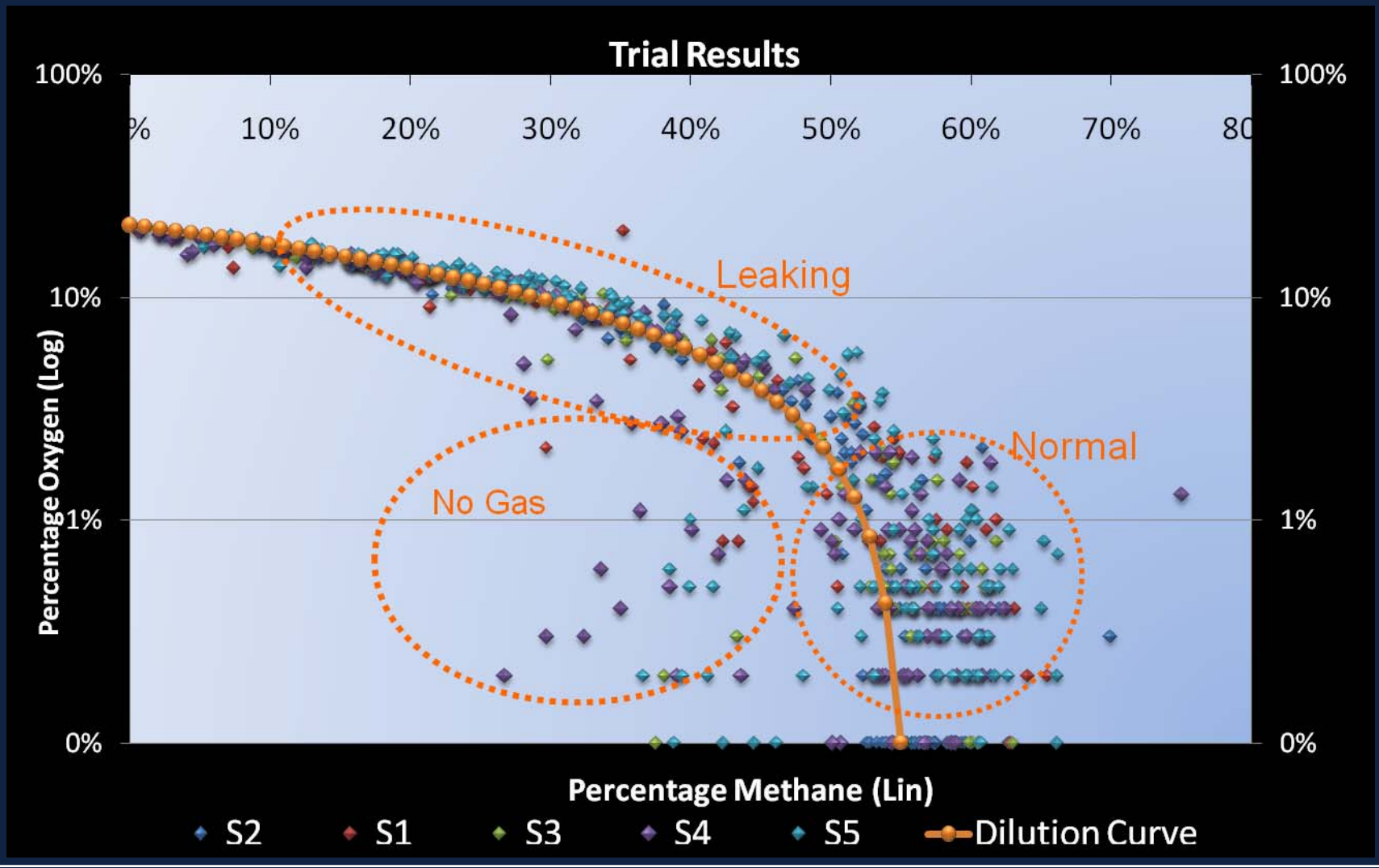

Other issues

- Volume correction for altitude and temperature
  - Are the gas pumps correctly rated?
  - Are flow meters corrected?
- Condensate drainage
  - Flow restrictions can occur
- Pressure drop in pipe work
  - Is there enough suction on the site

Are we collecting all the gas?

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η – Collection Efficiency can't be modelled

- Reasonable assumptions are needed
- Adjustment based on history is required

Rio Azul Gas Model

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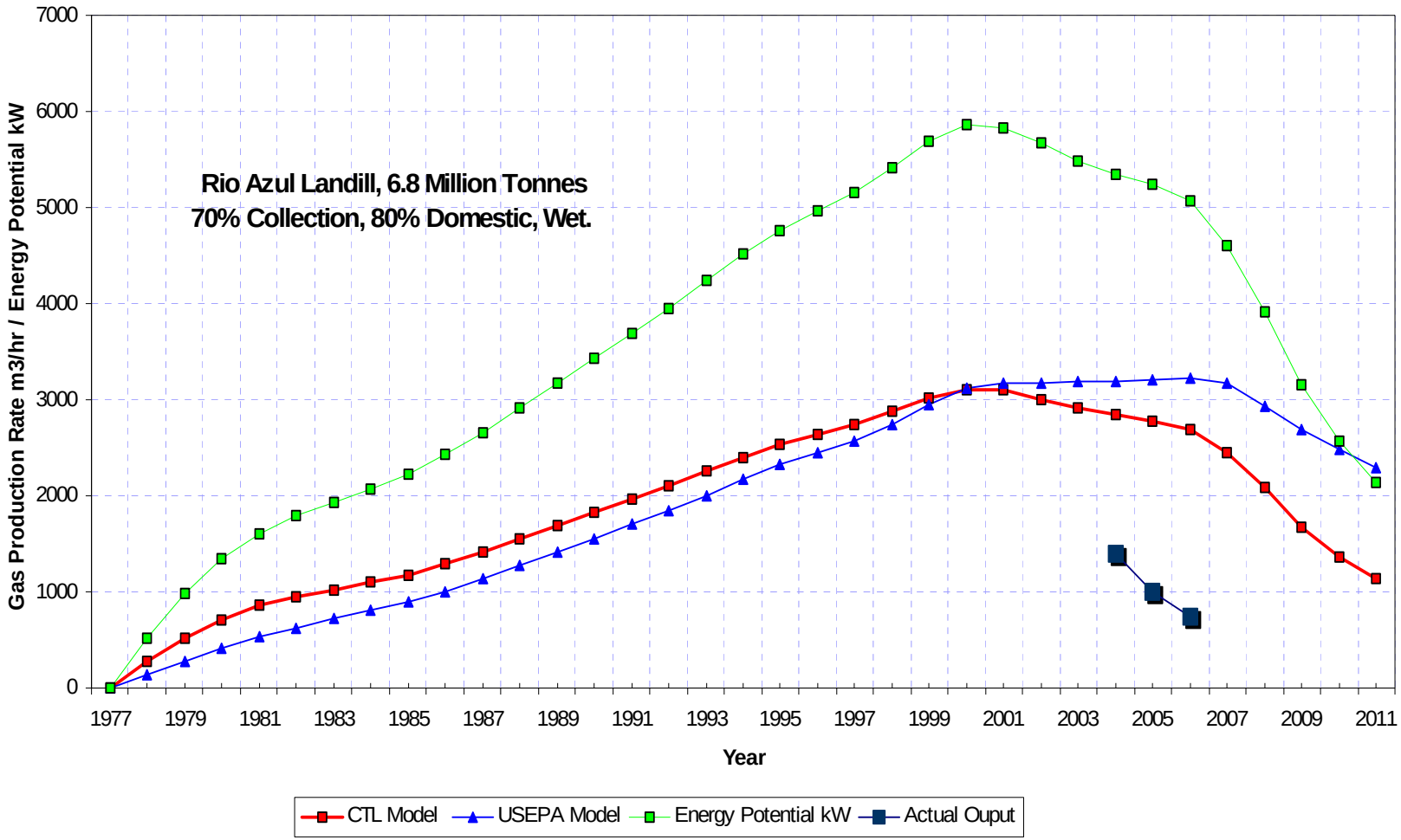

Simeprodeso Gas Model

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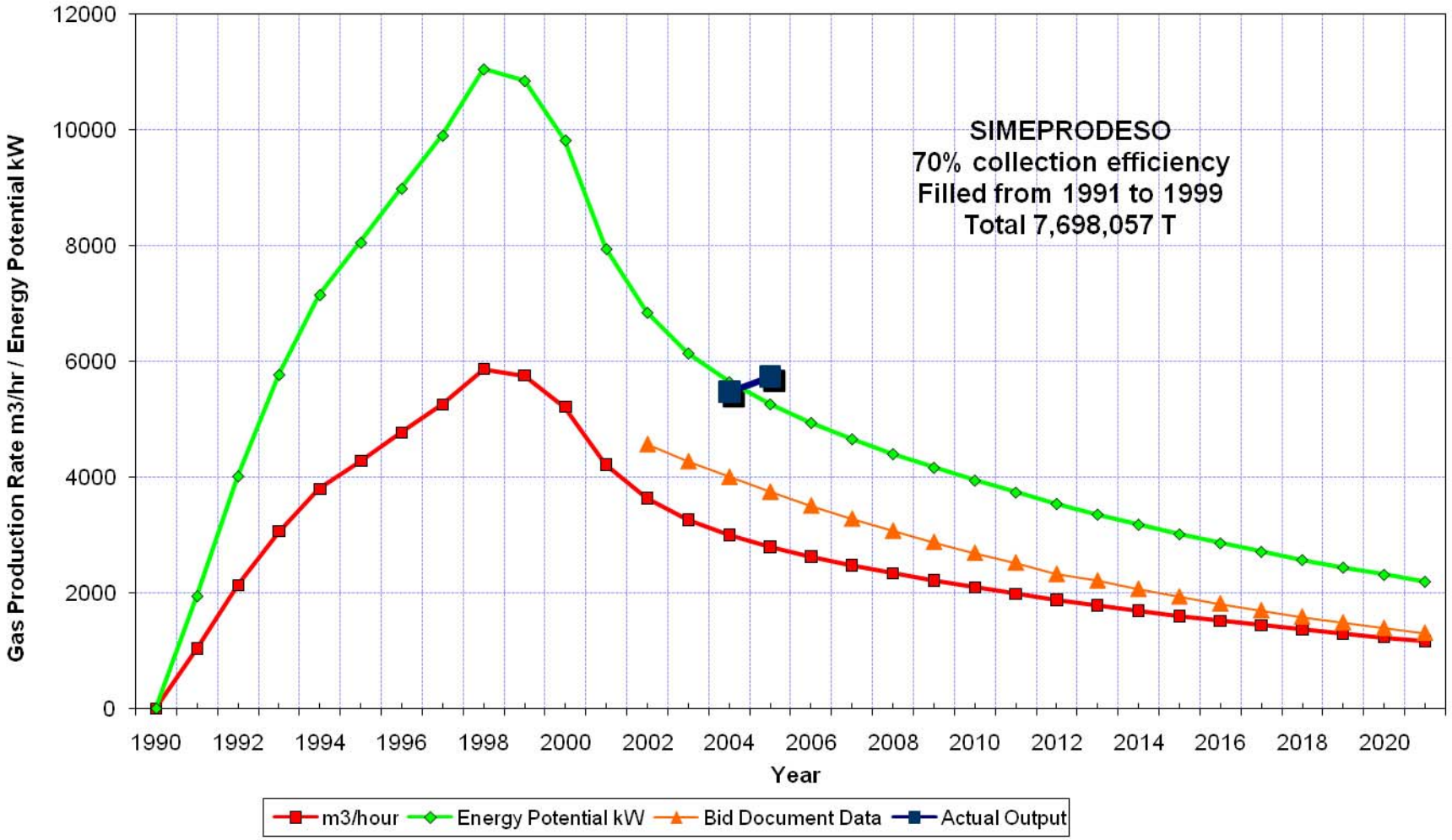

Gas Models - Summary

- May not adequately assess;
  - Site Conditions
  - Site Operations
  - Contractual terms

- Do not replace gas pumping trials

- Modelling requires actual and detailed knowledge of the site.
  - Take 50 gas models

On average they may be more or less correct .

!Any individual may be an order of magnitude wrong!

Gas Models - Summary

- In Practice;
  - Gas Models can be quite good
  - Require to have detailed knowledge of the landfill
    - Waste
    - Engineering
    - Management
    - Environment

- CDM landfill gas projects are measured ‘ex-post’
- Often ‘what you get is what you get’ – and with experience that is usually pretty good!

Thank you

For further information;

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