



New Zealand Biochar Research Centre

NZ BIOCHAR NETWORK NEWSLETTER

June 2009

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Welcome

Welcome to the June 09 edition of the NZ Biochar Network newsletter.

The objectives of the NZ Biochar Network are to:

1. Transfer knowledge on NZ biochar research and technology developments and relevant international research to NZ stakeholders with a focus on the application of biochar to reduce GHG emissions.
2. Provide a mechanism to discuss biochar issues and stakeholder needs with regard to the operational application of biochar.

Biochar, of course, is a fine-grained charcoal high in organic carbon and largely resistant to decomposition. It is produced from the thermal decomposition of organic feedstocks – generally at relatively slow heating rates under oxygen-limited conditions (slow pyrolysis) - although other techniques may also be used.

In this newsletter we report on the Inaugural Asia Pacific Biochar Conference held on the Gold Coast at the end of May 2009. We also provide links to recent research reports, commercial activity and recent NZ government announcements relevant to Biochar.

We encourage members of the Biochar Network to send in relevant news items on research or technology developments that can be published in the newsletter. Our website is www.biochar.co.nz.

Bill Dyck
NZ Biochar Network Coordinator
(BillDyck@xtra.co.nz)

The network is initially being funded by industry sponsors (Carter Holt Harvey, Foundation for Arable Research, Lake Taupo Forest Trust, Landcorp, and NZ Forest Owners Association) and the SFF and is being administered through the New Zealand Biochar Research Centre (NZBRC) at Massey University.

News

Asia Pacific Biochar Conference, Gold Coast, 17- 20 May 2009

The recent Biochar Conference in Queensland was very well attended with registrations completely sold out. Speaking to the conference delegates at the welcoming reception, the Australian Opposition Leader, Malcom Turnbull confirmed that incentives to encourage the use of "biochar" in the fight against climate change will be central to his negotiations with the Rudd Government over its emissions trading scheme. He said the technology to store carbon in the soil needed "economic incentives" from government and a diplomatic effort so that it was recognised in any new international climate change deal. (more: <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,25498140-11949,00.html>)

New Zealand was well represented at the conference and Dr Attilio Pigneri, from Massey University, was on the organizing committee. Professor Leo Condron, Lincoln University presented a paper "Biochar effects on nitrous oxide emissions from a pasture soil" while Dr Marta Camps, from Massey University was a session keynote speaker and gave a talk on "The New Zealand Biochar Research Centre: Firmly walking on the 'ground'". She also presented several other papers co-authored/authored by researchers from Massey University and several Spanish Research Institutions. Dr. Pigneri and PhD student Ruy Anaya de la Rosa, from Massey University, gave a presentation on "Opportunities and challenges for biochar/bioenergy systems in the compliance and voluntary carbon markets". Ajit Sarmah from Landcare Research, Hamilton, presented a poster on "Retention capacity of three types of biochar for estrogenic steroid hormones in dairy farm soil", which was awarded as the best poster of the conference. The Conference was an excellent opportunity for "biochar" researchers to interact and exchange ideas and results. The next Conference will be held in 2011 in Japan. Dr Camps presentation conference presentation is available on the NZ Biochar Research Centre website, along with a previous presentation "Learning from nature":

<http://www.biochar.co.nz/pdf/Learning%20from%20nature.pdf>

<http://www.biochar.co.nz/pdf/Marta%20Camps-keynote-v2.pdf>

The intention is to make the most relevant findings from the Conference available to Network members by providing links to papers and relevant reports.

Biochar included in draft Copenhagen Text - From the IBI Website

In the first release of draft negotiating text for the upcoming Copenhagen meetings in December, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has included biochar in a section entitled "Enhanced Action on Mitigation". The text will serve as the basis for negotiations during the pre-Copenhagen meetings in Bonn which started on Monday (1 June 09) and run to the 12th of June, and ultimately for the meetings in Copenhagen 1-12 December 2009. The text states:

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Agriculture

134. Parties shall cooperate in R&D of mitigation technologies for the agriculture sector, recognizing the necessity for international cooperative action to enhance and provide incentives for mitigation of GHG emissions from agriculture, in particular in developing countries. Consideration should be given to the role of soils in carbon sequestration, including through the use of **biochar** and enhancing carbon sinks in drylands. (more: <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2009/awglca6/eng/08.pdf>)

Recent New Zealand Government Announcements

New Greenhouse Gas Research Centre to be established (2 June 2009)

The Government has announced it is setting up a greenhouse gas research centre targeting solutions for New Zealand's agriculture and horticulture emissions.

The Centre for Agricultural Greenhouse Gas Research will promote win-win technologies that both reduce emissions, and improve on-farm efficiency and productivity. The Centre will focus on GHG mitigation research related to the pastoral, arable, horticulture, poultry and pig sectors including:

- methane from ruminant animals and waste systems,
- nitrous oxide from ruminant animals and nitrogen fertiliser, and
- soil carbon from agriculture and horticulture.

Clearly there is considerable scope for research on the application of Biochar to reduce emissions. (More: <http://beehive.govt.nz/release/leap+forward+greenhouse+gas+research>)

New Zealand Seminars

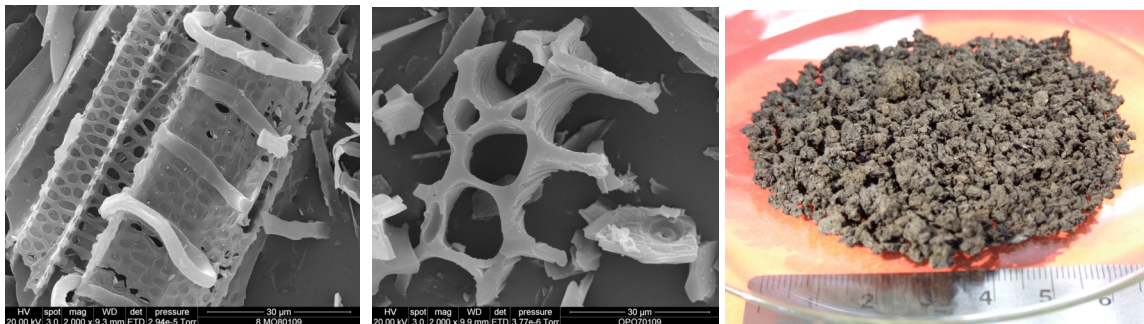
There were several biochar seminars held throughout the North Island in April and May. A seminar is being planned for the South Island in the near future.

International Conferences

North American Biochar Conference

Boulder, Co. August 9-12, 2009

(<http://www.biochar-international.org/upcomingibiconferences/2009northamericaregion.html>)



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