



August 2014 News from the International Biochar Initiative

IBI Members to Vote on Proposed Policy Revisions to the *IBI Biochar Standards*

Beginning on Tuesday, September 2, 2014, IBI will invite dues-paying members in good standing to cast their votes on proposed policy revisions to the *Standardized Product Definition and Product Testing Guidelines for Biochar That Is Used in Soil* (aka the *IBI Biochar Standards*). The proposed revisions address: 1) testing requirements for weathered biochar; 2) timing of testing for post-processed biochar; 3) provisions for high carbon biomass ash; and 4) biochar sampling procedures. **The balloting period will be open for 30 days from September 2nd until October 1st.** If you are not a member and wish to join in order to vote, please go to www.biochar-international.org/join.

The process to incorporate policy revisions into the *IBI Biochar Standards* began in late 2013 and as per IBI's documented process for developing and revising the Standards, has been open, transparent, and inclusive. The proposed changes were based on input from biochar stakeholders and experts, and the process has involved a public comment period, informational webinars, and two rounds of input from biochar experts in the areas being addressed. The amended proposed revisions are now in final form and will be available for review and voting by IBI membership beginning on September 2nd. At that time we will also publish a summary and tally of all comments received during the public comment period and public webinars, including an IBI response to each comment.

After the 30-day balloting period, each of the four proposed revisions will be individually approved or rejected by a simple majority based on the tally of votes of IBI dues-paying members. Approved policy revisions will be published in Version 2.0 of the *IBI Biochar Standards*. We are grateful for the continued participation and support, and constructive feedback received from our members, stakeholders, and the biochar community during this ongoing effort to enhance the relevance and utility of the *IBI Biochar Standards*. If you have any questions, please contact us at standards@biochar-international.org.

Participate in an IBI Public Survey to Collect Information on the Global Biochar Industry

As part of our ongoing efforts to identify trends in the evolution of the biochar industry, [IBI has launched a survey to gather data on global biochar enterprise activity in 2014](#). We request the participation of any individual or business that is actively commercializing a product or service related to biochar to help ensure the report accurately highlights the current breadth of the industry. The data collected will be analyzed and published in aggregated form later this year in our *2014 State of the Biochar Industry Report*. The survey should take 20 minutes or less to complete. You can read more about the survey and report at: http://www.biochar-international.org/2014_industry_survey

As a new feature for the 2014 report, we will include case studies of several biochar businesses which will be chosen from the survey respondents, so be sure to take the survey (we will reach out to all the potential case study subjects prior to publication for more information and to ensure they want to be included).

Please help us further distribute this survey by sending it to any mailing lists, internet discussion forums, or colleagues that are in the biochar industry.

Announcement: Webinar on Proposed CAPCOA Biochar Greenhouse Gas Quantification Protocol

On September 9th, IBI and project partners The Climate Trust and The Prasino Group will provide a technical and procedural briefing via webinar on the proposed protocol for biochar greenhouse gas offsets under the newly formed [Greenhouse Gas Reduction Exchange \(GHG Rx\)](#) administered by the [California Air Pollution Control Officers Association \(CAPCOA\)](#). The GHG Rx is a registry and information exchange for greenhouse gas emissions reductions designed for projects that generate credits for buyers, all within the state of California in the United States. The protocol—developed in parallel with the American Carbon Registry's *Methodology for Emission Reductions from Biochar Projects*—is commissioned by the Placer County (California) Air Pollution Control District (APCD). The webinar is titled “Development of a GHG Protocol on Behalf of the Placer County APCD for Biochar Projects within the CAPCOA GHG Exchange” and **will take place on September 9th from 4:00-6:00PM EDT**. To register, [please click here](#). After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

IBI Webinar Series: A Conversation with Dr. Johannes Lehmann

IBI is thrilled to welcome the world-renowned biochar researcher and IBI Chairman of the Board, Johannes Lehmann, to join us for an October webinar as part of the *IBI Webinar Series*. These webinars allow IBI to connect IBI members to leaders in the biochar field, from business professionals to producers and academics, who will present cutting-edge information, research, and updates to our IBI membership. Each participant will have an opportunity to interact live with the presenter by submitting questions before or during the webinar for live responses, as time permits. [Registration is open now](#).



You must be a dues-paying member to participate in these special events. (If you are not an IBI member and would like to join, [please click here](#). **A recording of the webinar will be available afterward, in the member's only area of our website.**

Our next webinar will be held on Tuesday, October 21st at 3:00p.m. Eastern Daylight Time with Dr. Lehmann, professor of soil biogeochemistry and soil fertility management at Cornell University. Dr. Lehmann will give a presentation titled “Managing diversity in biochar properties: from material properties to products”, and will discuss how biochars come in many “shapes and sizes”. The choice of feedstock and pyrolysis conditions dramatically changes the properties of biochars, whether it is pH value, ability to retain water, persistence in soil, or nutrient content. This can be an asset since soil constraints vary, but also a challenge when it comes to assessing suitable biochars for specific soil fertility issues and to communicating many potential values of biochar on a global scale.

If you are interested in attending on October 21st at 3:00pm New York/USA time (EDT), you can reserve your webinar place now at: <https://www3.gotomeeting.com/register/788854694>. (Note: Please convert the 3:00 pm EDT start time to your local time [by using this time converter tool](#))

For more information on this program, including a link to last month's presentation recording by Dr. Steven McGreevy, please see: http://www.biochar-international.org/webinar_series.

IBI Organization Member Profile

A listing of all current IBI [Business](#) and [Organization](#) Members can be found on our website. For more information on membership opportunities and benefits, or to join, please see: <http://www.biochar-international.org/join>. Please note, Business and Organization descriptions are submitted by each individual entity, and are not developed or written by IBI.

Renewing Organization Member: Alberta Biochar Initiative (ABI)

Lakeland College and Alberta Innovates Technology Futures (AITF), with assistance from Western Economic Diversification Canada and industry support, have developed the Alberta Biochar Initiative. The ABI is intended to develop and demonstrate technologies that will enable the large scale commercial deployment of biochar products and biochar applications for the benefit of Albertans.



Established in December 2011, the ABI consists of small-to-medium sized enterprises (SMEs), industry, academia, and government by sharing information, and producing biochar for end-use applications. These applications include soil amendments, reclamation, remediation, horticultural growth media, and lifecycle analysis for potential carbon sequestration applications. For more information, please go to: <http://albertabiochar.ca>.

Renewing Organization Member: International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA)

ICBA is a non-profit, autonomous international agricultural research center headquartered in Dubai, UAE. ICBA conducts research and development programs that aim to improve agricultural productivity and sustainability in marginal environments.



ICBA's multi-pronged approach to address the closely linked challenges of water, environment, income, and food security include research innovations in the assessment of natural resources, climate change adaptation, crop productivity and diversification, aquaculture and bio-energy, and policy analysis. ICBA is working on a number of technology developments including the use of conventional and non-conventional water (such as saline, treated wastewater, industrial water, and seawater); water and land management technologies, and remote sensing and modeling for climate change adaptation. Building capacity and sharing knowledge is an important part of all ICBA does. ICBA's work reaches countries, including least developed countries, in Central Asia and the Caucasus, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), South and South East Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and Gulf Cooperation Council countries. For more information on ICBA, please go to: www.biosaline.org.

Biochar Briefs: News Roundup for August

We update the website daily with new articles on biochar. For more information, please see: <http://www.biochar-international.org/newsbriefs>.

Australia

[The Simpsons, a farming family in New South Wales](#), practice sustainable farming methods in their banana groves. These groves have rye grass and native vetch growing between the trees rather than bare earth to help hold nutrients. The grass and vetch, along with banana leaves, is usually cut and

thrown under banana plants for mulch to increase organic content. The family is going to start using biochar in trials on some of its plants to investigate increased nutrient retention.

[Euan Beamont was a farmer in Western Australia searching for more sustainable farming practices.](#) So he teamed up with Tom Vogan to co-found Energy Farmers Australia and the pair developed a mobile pyrolysis kiln to produce both heat and biochar for use on farms. "I used to hate burning crop residue like straw, I began to think there must be a better way to utilize that resource, and that's the main driver for me." Mr Beamont said.

Jamaica

[The Network of Women \(NOW\) for Food Security is a women's group in Jamaica](#) which is working to develop Jamaica's emerging bamboo industry and help alleviate rural poverty. Part of this effort has been producing charcoal for sale as a fuel and also biochar as a soil amendment. The group started its operations two years ago, and one of their products is an organic fertilizer made from goat manure eaten by California red worms whose droppings are mixed with biochar.

Opportunities in Biochar

- The US Biochar Initiative (USBI) has put out a request for preliminary proposals to host USBI's 2015 North American Biochar Conference. They are looking for a self-organized group, with a demonstrated interest in biochar and at least 5 members, located anywhere in North America to host the next conference (proposals due September 15). For more information, see: http://www.biochar-international.org/USBI_2015_Conferencerequest.
- Job postings in biochar (as well as research/educational opportunities) can be accessed at: <http://www.biochar-international.org/network/jobs>.
- The Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs is collecting nominations for the 2015 Roy Family Award for Environmental Partnership; due September 15. For more information, see: <http://www.biochar-international.org/node/5204>.
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced funding availability for turning biomass material into energy. For more information, see: <http://www.biochar-international.org/node/5153>.
- Looking for potential grant funding? Check out the Terra Viva Grants Directory which develops and manages information about grants for agriculture, energy, environment, and natural resources in the world's developing countries at: <http://www.terravivagrants.org/Home>.

Upcoming Calendar Events

- September 2 – 5: Symposium on Thermal and Catalytic Sciences for Biofuels and Biobased Products. Location: Denver, CO, USA. For more information: <http://www.biochar-international.org/node/4582>
- September 5 – 7: Bio-charfest 2014. Location: Mullumbimby, Australia. For more information: <http://www.biochar-international.org/node/5156>
- September 22 – 25: Biochar Session at ELS 2014 Conference: The Biochar Effect along the soil-rhizosphere-plant-atmosphere continuum. Location: Italy. For more information: <http://www.biochar-international.org/node/4704>
- October 3 – 5: Bio-Char Workshop at Quantum Leaps Lodge. Location: British Columbia, Canada. For more information: <http://www.biochar-international.org/node/5149>
- October 5 – 8: Special Symposium on "Biochar: Production, Characterization and Applications" at CLEAR 2014 Conference. Location: Chuncheon, Korea. For more information: <http://www.biochar-international.org/node/4828>
- October 8 – 9: 2nd annual AIDF Food Security Summit. Location: Jakarta, Indonesia. For more information: <http://www.biochar-international.org/node/5327>

- November 7 – 11: Biochar School: Appropriate Technology for the Small Farm. Location: Sonoma, CA, USA. For more information: <http://www.biochar-international.org/node/5338>

See the [IBI Calendar page](#) for more events. To add an event to the calendar, send the information to info@biochar-international.org.

Regional Group Updates

To read more on the 57 regional and national biochar groups, please see IBI's website (link to: <http://www.biochar-international.org/network/communities>). This month's update is courtesy of the South East Asia Biochar Interest Group at <http://sea-biochar.blogspot.com/>.

In northern Thailand, the organization *Warm Heart* has been developing a low-cost, in-field pyrolyzer for poor, small farmers. The pyrolyzer is intended for use with biomass residues like rice and wheat straw, peanuts, potatoes, and soy hay, all of which are too low-density to economically collect and move to a central location for pyrolysis. The unit consists of four wall panels and a roof, all slotted for simple set-up without fasteners. Each piece snaps open and closed to permit easy replacement of the corrugated roofing metal panels. All the materials can be found at local recycling centers; assembly requires a small arc welder and circular grinder/cutter. Each piece weighs approximately 10 kg. The entire unit plus a 200 liter drum of quenching water fit easily in the back of a small truck and can be assembled by two men in less than five minutes. The unit accepts slightly more than 3 cu meters of fuel when packed. It currently runs at 20% efficiency and can be refilled every 2.5 hours. The rainy season has stopped experimentation for now, but testing will resume in October.



Recently Published Biochar Research

IBI tracks all published research on biochar and includes it in our [online bibliography](#). The following articles were added in the last month. Please visit the website bibliography for more information on any of these articles. Due to copyright infringement laws, we cannot provide full copies of articles unless we have permission from the publisher. If you have published work that is not included, [please email us](#).

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