



23 October 2009

IBI Sends Comments to UK Parliament on House of Commons Library Report "Biochar and Climate Change"

The International Biochar Initiative has delivered comments to the UK Parliament on a note from the House of Commons Library entitled, "Biochar and Climate Change." This IBI paper is a fully referenced document that assesses the current state of biochar research and development. Click on [this link to read IBI's letter to Parliament](#) or find it on the IBI website under IBI Publications.

IBI Welcomes New Board Member: David Wayne

IBI is pleased to announce that David Wayne has joined the IBI Board of Directors as of October, 2009. David was born in the UK, obtained his school education and bachelor's degree (in chemistry) in Johannesburg, South Africa, continuing studies in Chemical Physics at Queen's University Ontario and Cambridge, England. After short spells of postdoctoral research in Southampton, the Smithsonian Institution in Massachusetts and the Herzberg Institute in Ottawa, David joined Shell Research, working on various topics including flame radiation, transport properties in liquids, lubrication and finally, biochar. David brings a wealth of technical, scientific, and industry knowledge, skills and experience to the IBI Board, and we are delighted to welcome him and are already enjoying the benefits of his contributions. For more information on the IBI Board of Directors, please see: <http://www.biochar-international.org/board/advisorycommittee>.



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Practitioner's Profile: Exceptional Results in Biochar Trials in Cameroon

****This article was written by Chris Goodall and originally published 10/1/2009 at Carbon Commentary. It is used here with permission from the author.*

Many field studies in the tropics carried out by academic researchers have shown that biochar improves soil productivity. Biochar Fund's research did more. It showed that poor farmers typically making less than \$300 a year from their crops were able to improve their own yields using simple techniques both for making the char and adding it to the soil. Average production of maize from this area of Cameroon is about 1.7 tonnes per hectare compared to about 7 to 9 tonnes in the EU or US. If the initial results are replicated elsewhere, the impact of biochar could see yields increase by 40% above what would otherwise be obtained.... To read the full article, go to: <http://www.biochar-international.org/cameroon>.



Photo: Farmers in Teke show the difference between the roots of a maize plant grown in biochar (left) and the roots of the same plant grown in bare soil. Credit: Laurens Rademakers and Etchi Daniel-Jones

IBI Highlights the Importance of Biochar at Meetings at USDA and the World Bank

IBI Board Chairman Dr. Johannes Lehmann was recently invited to participate in the Expert Workshop on Greenhouse Gas Estimation Methods for Agriculture held at the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) October 14 - 15, 2009 in Washington DC. Dr. Lehmann was a key speaker on biochar and its potential as a carbon sequestration method in soils.

Also on October 15, Dr. Lehmann and IBI Executive Director Debbie Reed participated in a Brown Bag Luncheon Seminar at the World Bank entitled: Biochar for Sustainable Emission Reductions. Dr. Lehmann was an invited speaker at the event, along with Jerry Harrison of VenEarth Group LLC, Ken Newcombe of C-Quest Capital LLC, and Phil Covell of The Katoomba Incubator/Forest Trends. Michele de Nevers of the World Bank chaired the meeting.

IBI Agricultural Extension Director Julie Major Participates in "Scaling Up Community Carbon Projects" Workshop in Chiapas, Mexico

On 12-14 October, Julie had the pleasure of joining a diverse group of stakeholders to share experiences and reflect on barriers to the scaling up of community-level carbon emission offset projects in the developing world. Participants included representatives from most voluntary carbon market standards, as well as managers of community projects in Central America and Africa. The workshop was funded by Plan Vivo, Canada's International Development Research Center, and the AMBIO cooperative in Mexico.



The fact that carbon projects can and should also be valued for ancillary social and environmental benefits they provide was emphasized, in view of their potential for assisting the achievement of development goals. A field trip to a nearby project took place on the second day. Julie presented biochar as a tool for overcoming barriers related to the inclusion of soil carbon into the voluntary carbon market. Apart from obvious advantages related to carbon permanence, additionality and monitoring, the fact that biochar also improves soil fertility was indicated as a strong advantage of the technology, which may facilitate farmer adoption.

Photo: Participants in the Scolel'Te (Growing Tree) project, courtesy of Julie Major.

Biochar Focus of Article by Nobel Laureate Mario Molina in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences

A paper by Nobel Laureate Dr. Mario Molina and five co-authors entitled "Cutting Non-CO₂ Pollutants Can Delay Abrupt Climate Change, Solve 'Fast Half' of Climate Problem" has been published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS). Biochar is one of the four fast-action strategies the authors propose to reduce the risk of abrupt climate change. The article states: "reducing non-CO₂ climate change agents such as black carbon soot, tropospheric ozone, and hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), as well as expanding biosequestration through biochar production, can forestall fast approaching abrupt climate changes." To read the full paper, please see: <http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2009/10/19/0902568106.full.pdf>

New Biochar Networking Site: BiocharCentral.com

BiocharCentral.com is a new website set up for social networking, media sharing, forums and interviews of leading biochar researchers and developers. Visitors to the site can ask questions, read articles and blog posts, and post their own opinions and photos. Visit www.BiocharCentral.com for more information and to sign up--membership is free.

NE USA Biochar Conference less than a Month Away

On Friday, November 13, 2009, the University of Amherst, MA (USA) will host the Northeast Biochar Symposium 2009. This event will highlight current biochar research and technological advances and provide vital information to public officials, researchers, farmers and landscape professionals, green industry businesses, and sustainable energy professionals. It will also convene interest in establishing a Northeast Biochar Research Consortium, and will be followed by a day-long Biochar Technology Demonstration Field Day, to be hosted by New England Small Farm Institute, Belchertown, MA on Saturday Nov 14, 2009. For more information and to register, see: <http://www.nsm.umass.edu/biochar09>

Looking for Some Quick Answers to Biochar Questions?

IBI has compiled some of the most frequently asked questions on biochar on the IBI website. These are questions we hear often and range from "what is biochar?" to "can I use biochar on alkaline soils?". Obviously, what is provided are short answers--many of these questions could make up a full research study. These questions and answers are updated as new information comes in. To visit the FAQs page go to: <http://www.biochar-international.org/biochar/faqs>.

Regional Updates

New regional biochar groups have formed in India (Biochar Society of India) and in Canada (Prairie Biochar).

Prairie Biochar Initiative (PBI)

The proposed mission of the PBI is to ensure effective coordination of biochar-related activities in the Prairie provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, Canada. This includes (i) outreach to farmers, agricultural and forestry associations, industry, carbon offset suppliers, the public, and other potential end-users; (ii) advocacy at the municipal, provincial, and federal level on the opportunities presented by biochar and pyrolysis units; (iii) disseminating information on activities and R&D initiatives as they relate to biochar and biochar production in the Prairie provinces. The current plan is for PBI to function under the umbrella of the Canadian Biochar Initiative.

The Prairie Biochar Initiative had an initial organizing meeting October 20, 2009. For more information, see: <http://www.biochar-international.org/regional/prairie>
