



The National Landcare Facilitator

Newsletter – January 2012

Biochar – Implications for Agricultural Productivity



A report released by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES), reveals biochar could help improve agricultural productivity and assist in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The report, titled 'Biochar—Implications for agricultural productivity', examines the potential applications, benefits and risks of biochar as well as the research required to determine its productivity and sustainability potential. ABARES acting Deputy Executive Director, Dr Kim Ritman, said the report highlights the importance of further biochar research for Australian farming.

This report focuses on production and application of biochar to soils to improve soil function and the ancillary benefits that may arise. Use of biochar as a way to abate greenhouse gases and sequester carbon is discussed in only general terms.

Biochar is a stable, carbon-rich form of charcoal that can be applied to agricultural land as part of agronomic or environmental management. It can be produced by pyrolysis; where biomass such as crop stubble, wood chips, manure and municipal waste is heated with little or no oxygen. To view the report go to:

http://adl.brs.gov.au/data/warehouse/biochar9abcm001/biochar9abcm00101/TR.2011.06_Biochar_v1.0.0.pdf.

NRM Knowledge Online Digital Archive – Now Open

This repository is designed as an open access digital archive for publicly funded information derived from Australian Government investments in natural resource management (NRM) activities. Items for inclusion in the NRM knowledge online digital archive are publicly available print and electronic format documents reporting on or derived from biodiversity conservation activities, land management activities, biophysical, social and economic research, and policy activities and related initiatives supported by Australian Government natural resource management funding.

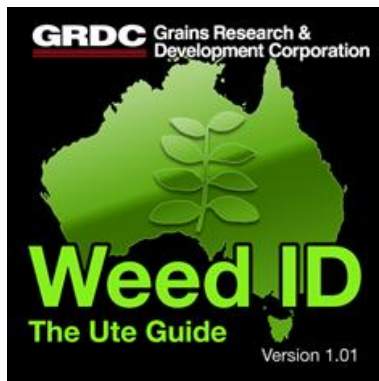
The Australian Government has invested in a wide range of activities under its natural resource management programs and initiatives including the Caring for our Country initiative, the National Action Plan on Salinity and Water Quality, Natural Heritage Trust, National Landcare Program, and Defeating the

Weeds Menace. These have variously produced a range of information products - including publications, images, audio-visual products, maps and databases - that are currently stored in a variety of widely dispersed locations.

The Australian Government Land and Coasts team has developed a digital archive to manage these information outputs to ensure that the information produced as a result of Australian Government investments is readily discoverable and publicly accessible over an extended period of time. The initial focus is on publications but the archive has the capability of storing a wide range of digital formats. The content of the repository will be publicly exposed as **NRM knowledge online**, an integrated knowledge management and discovery tool for information products related to primary production and natural resource management related research and management activities.

For more information go to: <http://nrmonline.nrm.gov.au/>.

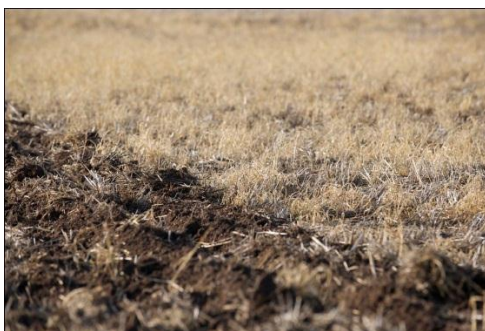
New Smart Phone Weed App



The Grains Research & Development Corporation (GRDC) has produced a free mobile app which is designed to be used in the paddock by growers to assist in identifying the most common, annual, biennial and perennials weeds in Southern Australia.

Where possible photographs have been provided of the weed at various growth stages to ensure correct identification. Each weed has a calendar to show which month/s the weed is likely to be present in the paddock. The application allows users to search, identify, compare and email photographs of weeds to their networks. For more information go to: <http://itunes.apple.com/au/app/weeds-the-ute-guide/id482862261?mt=8&ls=1> or <http://www.grdc.com.au/director/events/apps?shortcut=1>.

Action on the Ground Grants – Close 8th February



The *Action on the Ground* program is a six year program that will invest \$99 million to assist individuals and groups of landholders and researchers, industry and farming organisations across Australia to trial and demonstrate on-farm management practices and technologies to reduce agricultural greenhouse gas emissions and/or sequester carbon in soil.

The first round of *Action on the Ground* 2011-12 is now open for applications and will provide up to \$25 million in competitive grant funding for on-farm projects that trial and demonstrate innovative practices and/or abatement technologies that can lead to a reduction in agricultural greenhouse gas emissions (methane and nitrous oxide) and/or sequester carbon in soil, including reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from agricultural 'wastes'.

For more information about *Action on the Ground*, including the *Action on the Ground* round one guidelines and on-line application form are available at: www.daff.gov.au/climatechange/carbonfarmingfutures/action-on-the-ground or by calling 1800

025 005 or by email: aotg@daff.gov.au. **Applications for the first round of *Action on the Ground* 2011-12 close 5pm (AEST) 8 February 2012.**

C4oC Business Plan Applications Close -9th February



The Federal Government is seeking applications for grants for natural resource management and sustainable agriculture projects that address the Business Plan targets and can be completed by June 2013.

Funding of up to \$64 million is available under this business plan for projects in the 2012/13 financial year. For more information go to: www.nrm.gov.au. Or by calling 1800 552 008.

Applications Close 9th February 2012.

Filling the Research Gap – Applications close February 3rd



The first round of competitive grants funding will provide \$48 million to Australian businesses, research organisations and/or government agencies for the research of activities and practices aiming to reduce agricultural greenhouse emissions (methane and nitrous oxide), increase soil carbon and improve modelling capability. Outcomes of *Filling the Research Gap* will contribute to enhancing agricultural productivity and unlocking new opportunities for land managers to participate in carbon farming and the Carbon Farming Initiative.

Information about *Filling the Research Gap*, including the *Filling the Research Gap round one Guidelines* and application form are available at: www.daff.gov.au/climatechange/carbonfarmingfutures/fttg or by phoning 1800 108 760 or email: fttg@daff.gov.au. **Applications for the first funding round will close 5pm (AEST) 3 February 2012. Eligible applications will be assessed through a competitive grants process.**

Biochar R&D Funding – closes February 3rd

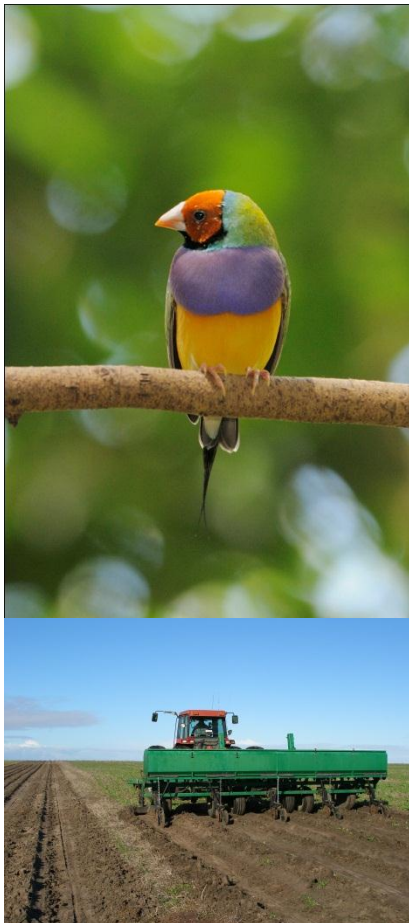
The *Biochar Capacity Building Program* will provide \$2 million in funding from 2011-12 to 2013-14 to assist the research and development of biochar use in Australia, as a practical mitigation option for land managers. The *Biochar Capacity Building Program* will support research, on-ground testing and demonstration of biochar to provide additional options for land managers to contribute to reducing Australia's carbon pollution. This includes activities such as the research of biochar use as way of

mitigating greenhouse emissions, testing and demonstration of biochar use on-farm and the development of biochar offset methodologies to enable land managers to participate in the CFI.

The *Biochar Capacity Building Program* will complement work under the *Climate Change Research Program*, including work through the *National Biochar Research Initiative* and the *Soil Carbon Research Program*. To view the guidelines, apply for funding or find out more please visit the Biochar Capacity Building Program website at: www.daff.gov.au/climatechange/cfi/biochar or phone 1800 638 746 or email biocharprogram@daff.gov.au.

Applications for the *Biochar Capacity Building Program* will close 5pm (AEST) 3 February 2012. Eligible applications will be assessed through a competitive grants process.

Biodiversity Fund – Applications close 31st January



The Biodiversity Fund is a program designed to help farmers restore, manage and better protect biodiversity on their land. People who live and work on the land are only too aware of the connection between protecting biodiversity and keeping their land healthy and productive. The Australian Government will invest \$946 million over the next six years to help farmers and other land managers, store carbon, enhance biodiversity and build greater resilience across the Australian landscape.

Through the following themes, the Biodiversity Fund will provide financial support to help land managers:

- increase native vegetation on their property through planting native mixed-species appropriate for their region
- protect and enhance existing native vegetation on their property so they can maximise its carbon storage and biodiversity benefits
- control the spread of invasive species through a connected landscape.

A productive environment and storing carbon in the landscape go hand in hand. Some land managers may choose to build on the Biodiversity Fund projects by accessing carbon credits through the emerging carbon market.

Across Australia, farmers and other land managers already do a great job looking after biodiversity through initiatives such as Landcare. The \$31 million available through the first round of the Biodiversity Fund will help farmers and other land managers continue their important work enhancing biodiversity on the land.

Applications are now open to eligible land managers in the agriculture, forestry or conservation sectors working on either private or public land. **For more information and grant application guidelines go to www.environment.gov.au/cleanenergyfuture or call 1800 008 678.** To receive

regular updates about the Biodiversity Fund and other Land Sector Package measures send your details to cleanenergyenviro@environment.gov.au. **Applications close 5pm AEDT Tuesday 31 January 2012.**

New Publications on Carbon Farming

Recently a number of new publications on the topics of carbon farming and the carbon farming initiative have been released. Some of these include;

Carbon Farming Initiative – by Dept. Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries (DAFF) : http://www.daff.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1950783/cfi-fact-sheet.pdf.

Making Cents of Carbon & Emissions – by Victorian Dept. Primary Industries: <http://www.box.com/s/f48mguivnef3zmc6te2>.

Carbon Farming in Rural Queensland – by Qld Dept. Environment & Natural Resources: <http://www.climatechange.qld.gov.au/pdf/carbon-farming.pdf>.

Other Funding Opportunities

Coles Junior Landcare Grants - 101 schools around Australia will receive grants of up to \$1000 from round 3 to assist with the development of various garden projects, not only educating children about fresh fruit and vegetables, but also the importance of looking after the environment.



Schools, kindergartens, day care centres and youth groups looking to start their own garden program can apply for a Coles Junior Landcare garden grant by registering with Junior Landcare. Visit www.juniorlandcare.com.au or www.coles.com.au. 2012 Grants are now open.

2012 Closing dates:

- **Round 1:** Closes Friday 17th February, 5pm (EST)
- **Round 2:** Closes Friday 4th May, 5pm (EST)
- **Round 3:** Closes Friday 27th July, 5pm (EST)

Aussie Farmers Foundation Grants - Funding between \$10,000 and \$50,000 is available for projects which make a difference to the health and wellbeing of rural and regional communities throughout Australia. Applications close 3 February 2012 and further information is available at www.aussiefarmersfoundation.org.au. Eligible organisations must have Deductible Gift Recipient status.

Farm Ready Grants re-open – The program re-opened on 1 July 2011 and changes will be introduced to extend the availability of funds and make the program accessible to more primary producers. Each primary producer can still claim up to a maximum \$1500 each financial year, with funding up to \$500 also available to assist with travel, accommodation and child care expenses. The arrangements for indigenous land managers will not change and they will be eligible for a 100% reimbursement of the cost of approved training courses up to the maximum of \$1500 annually. For further information about FarmReady visit: www.daff.gov.au/farmready.

State Landcare Conferences & Other Dates

Landcare in Action: National Landcare & Catchment Management Conference 2012 - NZ Landcare Trust will host a 2-day conference starting 29th February 2012 at the Academy of Performing Arts, University of Waikato Campus, Hamilton, New Zealand. For more information go to: <http://www.landcare.org.nz/Conference/Conference-Programme>

4th National NRM Conference – 16-18th April in Adelaide. For more information go to: <http://www.aomevents.com/NRM2012>.

National Landcare Conference & Awards – The conference will be held in Sydney from the 3-5th September in conjunction with the National Landcare awards on the 4th. Details will be available soon.

Regional Landcare Facilitators

For the contact details for the RLF in your region go to: <http://www.nrm.gov.au/contact/index.html>.

Items for NLF Newsletter – If you have any events or items you would like included in the NLF Newsletter, please email them to me at the email address below.

To sign up for the NLF newsletter go to: <http://www.landcareonline.com.au/about/the-national-landcare-facilitator/nlf-e-newsletter/>

Regards,

Brett de Hayr - National Landcare Facilitator

Ph: 0457 750 815

Email: brettdehayr@landcarefacilitator.com.au.



CARING
FOR
OUR
COUNTRY

The National Landcare Facilitator Project is funded by the Federal Government