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New Fertilizer Offers Carbon Sequestration Benefit

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A research team including Clark Atlanta University, Georgia Institute of Technology, the U.S. Department of Energy National Renewable Energy Laboratory, Scientific Carbons Inc. and Envirotech Inc. are producing hydrogen from biomass while sequestering 25%, by weight, of carbon in the material in a demonstration project in Georgia. The group says the sequestration of the carbon in the output of this process is permanent. The resulting carbon, produced with USDA funding, is highly absorbent and can be combined with other products in the process to form a slow-release nitrogen fertilizer. That fertilizer, according to the group, can be used to offer verifiable carbon sequestration for ag while increasing farm income and crop yields. The idea is to use the sequestered carbon as a carrier for the nitrogen and as a soil amendment, preventing harmful runoff of farm chemicals.

The work is the culmination of a two-year research program. However, the work was also simply a demonstration project showing the potential of the technology. This is just an early project in the longer-term effort to create a commercially viable product. Scientific Carbons Inc. is seeking partners to carry the program forward. If the project were to reach a commercial stage it would offer farmers the opportunity to benefit from the move to sequester carbon as part of the worldwide effort to slow global warming.

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