



December 2014 Extension Snapshot Biochar Field Plots



The third year of field research using biochar as a soil amendment on low organic matter soils has been completed.

Biochar, a potential by-product of bioenergy production, has shown promise in raising the productivity of poor soils, especially in tropical areas. Research in the Midwest has been limited.

Field plots in Calhoun (McCully Heritage Farm) and Mason

County were initiated in 2012. Subplots received the equivalent of 10 tons or 20 tons of biochar per acre, with no biochar applied on control subplots. Biochar was only applied in 2012.

For year 3 yields, yield averages appear to be higher in biochar applied plots. However, there is a great amount of variation within plots.

Organic matter in biochar applied plots remains higher in biochar plots compared to control plots in 2014, averaging 0.4 % (Calhoun) to 0.7% (Mason) higher in the 20 tons/acre application areas, and 0.3 % (Calhoun) to 0.4% (Mason) in the 10 tons/acre application areas.

Further research will be conducted in Calhoun. Another potential plot may be initiated combining biochar and compost in 2015.

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