

Loam Bio Launches Biological for Carbon

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Australian company Loam Bio announced its entry into the U.S. agricultural biologicals space with the launch of CarbonBuilder, a new class of microbial seed treatment intended to increase soil organic carbon and overall soil health. In addition, farmers who use the product can earn revenue by participating in SecondCrop, the company's carbon credit program.



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In 2024, CarbonBuilder will be available to soybean farmers in Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

In an interview with DTN, Loam Bio CEO Guy Hudson said not all soil carbon is created equal. The microbial technology in CarbonBuilder increases the amount of stable carbon in the soil.

"We've done a lot of work with our academic partners to understand how these organisms can influence not just the building of carbon but also the stability of that carbon within the soil," he said. In the United States, Loam Bio has partnered with researchers at Texas A&M University, the University of Arizona and Lawrence Livermore National Laboratories in California.

Plants pull carbon from the atmosphere during photosynthesis, eventually turning it into particulate organic matter. This form of carbon can cycle in and out of the soil in a short period of time. According to Loam Bio, the soil fungi in CarbonBuilder work

to stabilize this carbon and increase levels of aggregate carbon and mineral-associated organic matter, the most stable carbon pools, within the soil. With greater stability, less carbon should be released back into the atmosphere.

Kevin Hodges, Loam Bio's senior vice president of U.S. commercial operations, said that in field trials across the upper Midwest, CarbonBuilder improved total organic carbon by 3.8% when compared to untreated plots. That translates to an increase in sequestered carbon of roughly 2 tons per acre. For comparison, the addition of cover crops in a rotation might generate 0.25 to 0.75 ton per acre, he said.