

Press Release

Des Moines, Iowa
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United Nations Identifies Agriculture as a Solution to Soaring CO₂ Emissions - Approves First Agricultural CDM Methodology

Bacteria to replace nitrogen fertilizer to create a more sustainable agricultural production system in developing countries

The United Nations, at its June meeting, gave approval for the broad application of the first agricultural methodology for Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) projects for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

"The UN's decision highlights how agriculture can provide solutions to climate change issues while feeding a growing world population," said Peg Armstrong-Gustafson, of Amson Technology, LC of Des Moines, Iowa, which, together with Becker Underwood, Inc of Ames, Iowa and Perspectives GmbH of Hamburg, Germany is responsible for the agricultural methodology used to design projects that eliminate the use of synthetic nitrogen on legumes, like soybeans and cowpeas.

"By using a unique bacterium to stimulate the creation of nitrogen by the plant for its own use, called biological nitrogen fixation (BNF), the plant eliminates the need for the application of nitrogen fertilizer," added Dr. Peter Innes, CEO of Becker Underwood. "We believe there are many bio-agronomic solutions to reducing CO₂ emissions that would be implemented around the world to mitigate climate change.

"The methodology is pioneering," according to Matthias Krey of Perspectives. "Never before has the UN approved a CDM methodology for agriculture. We are unique in the marketplace in proposing a biological approach to reducing greenhouse gases. Through the UN process of methodology approval and revisions we were able to craft a broad agricultural methodology that will bring new technology to farmers in emerging and developing countries."

"The production of nitrogen fertilizer is very energy intensive and releases considerable CO₂ emissions," said Peg Armstrong-Gustafson of Amson Technology. "If we can eliminate the application of nitrogen fertilizer on legume crops we can permanently reduce the amount of nitrogen fertilizer produced and avoid the CO₂ it creates."

“We have identified the key countries where the methodology fits and will soon begin implementing local CDM projects” states Innes. The unique bacteria from Becker Underwood will bring great benefit to the farmers enrolled in the projects and great benefit to the environment.”

The three firms launched the project more than three years ago. “With the CDM methodology that we have developed we are making an active contribution to climate protection and developing a sustainable transfer model for technology to emerging and developing countries,” commented Armstrong-Gustafson. “It is an environmentally and economically sensible model.”

“CDM projects run for up to 21 years and operate under the terms of the methodology for measuring and monitoring the reduction of CO₂ emissions,” Krey stated. “The long term goal is to see the new technology expand beyond the borders of the project and be adopted by all farmers to create a more sustainable and productive farming operation.”

The Companies:

Amson Technology LC is a greenhouse gas reduction and sustainability consulting firm.

Becker Underwood, Inc. is a leading developer of bio-agronomic and specialty products.

Perspectives GmbH, a point carbon company, is a high quality greenhouse gas reduction market solutions provider.

Press Contacts:

Peg Armstrong-Gustafson
Amson Technology, LC
Tel: 515-491-0128
peg@tmqmanagement.com

Matthias Krey
Perspectives GmbH
+41 44 82 04 210
krey@perspectives.cc

Dr. Peter Innes
Becker Underwood Inc.
800 – 232- 5907
peter.innes@beckerunderwood.com

Background: Clean Development Mechanism

The clean development mechanism (CDM) is part of the Kyoto Protocol, which industrialized countries have signed as a commitment to reduce their emissions of greenhouse gases. CDM enables the industrialized nations to meet their targets flexibly and cost effectively. Under the CDM, industrialized countries can purchase emission reduction certificates, so called Certified Emission Reductions (CERs) from projects reducing emissions in developing countries that do not have a reduction commitment under the Kyoto Protocol. Stringent eligibility criteria and a robust emission reduction accounting mechanism is an important feature of CDM. This quality assurance is vital as CERs can be bought and sold globally, are eligible under the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) and will very likely be accountable in the proposed federal US ETS.