



The locus AG greenhouse trial | Photo source Locus AG

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## PROGRAMME INCREASES CARBON SEQUESTRATION BY RESTORING SOIL

 AGRICULTURE & ENERGY

### A company that makes probiotics for soil health has developed a programme to help farmers increase carbon sequestration

**Spotted:** Locus Ag is producing probiotic products that can restore the microbial balance to depleted soils. The probiotics are fermented in a process similar to brewing and can be adjusted to different soil conditions. This allows farmers to apply the type of microbes that will work best with their soils.

Soils are a very efficient way to sequester carbon. Unlike the ocean, which becomes hotter and more acidic as it absorbs carbon, soil can actually benefit from the addition. Plants take up carbon dioxide during photosynthesis and use it to create sugars, but they also release sugars, which in turn are used by microbes in the soil. However, the overuse of fertilisers destroys the microbes and upsets the balance.

The probiotics have been demonstrated to increase crop yields, as well as the soil's ability to sequester an additional nine tons of carbon dioxide per acre annually over standard growing practices. Now, Locus AG has been named as the only US-based finalist in the AgriTech category for the global BOLD awards, for its CarbonNOW programme. This programme gives farmers access to special prices on the company's probiotic soil treatments, as well as carbon credits that can be sold on carbon trading platforms.

The other advantage of Locus' technique is that the probiotics can be produced in a small facility. Paul Zorner, CEO of Locus, describes it as a "microbrewery for agriculture", and as "a system that

could be shipped in a boxcar and set up relatively easily, as long as you have a basic power source.” This means it could enable soil enrichers to be manufactured on-site.

More farmers and researchers are recognising the importance of soil health to environmental sustainability. Some of the innovations we have recently seen in this space include a way to use plants to remove [heavy metals](#) from soil and the use of [cardboard planters](#) to reduce soil erosion.

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3rd March 2020

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### **Takeaway:**

Use of the probiotics has been demonstrated not only to increase crop yield but to improve the quality of fruits and vegetables grown. The company’s CarbonNOW programme not only greatly aids in carbon sequestration, but allows farmers around the world to earn extra money on carbon markets. Ultimately, Locus is demonstrating that agricultural soils are an important part of the solution to climate change.