

Biochar Commission Feedback Survey TOTALS

RESPONDENT	COUNT
District employee	62
District supervisor	40
Partner	3

BIOCHAR INTEREST LEVEL?	COUNT
Little interest	47
Some interest	16
Strong interest	5
Too early to tell	30
Unsure	7

PRODUCERS IN NEED?	COUNT
No	50
Unsure	14
Yes, a few	30
Yes, several	11

ALLOCATE \$300,00 FOR BIOCHAR?	COUNT
Yes	20
Neutral	20
No	65

NO.	Respondent	BIOCHAR INTEREST LEVEL?	PRODUCERS IN NEED?	ALLOCATE \$300,000 FOR BIOCHAR?	Please share any comments, suggestions or concerns.
1	District employee	Too early to tell	Yes, a few	No	NA
2	District supervisor	Too early to tell	Yes, a few	Neutral	Based on what I have seen, this looks to be a good way to take waste and turn it into something useful.
3	District supervisor	Little interest	No	No	I don't think funds should be taken from cost share for biochar.
4	District employee	Little interest	No	No	There are way better uses for those funds
5	District employee	Too early to tell	No	No	ACSP funding should be used for the local producers. Creating a biochar BMP through the ACSP is the best way to use these funds.
6	District employee	Some interest	Yes, a few	No	I think the Commission should consider directing the \$300k to fund technical assistance or placing it in the Ag Cost share program pool.
7	District supervisor	Little interest	Yes, a few	No	I believe that the money for cost share should be divided between all the counties.
8	District supervisor	Too early to tell	No	Yes	If it will help develop a market for pulpwood here in western NC I'm all for it.
9	District employee	Too early to tell	Yes, a few	Neutral	To my knowledge, we haven't had any interest in the office, but may get some interest since Montauk Ag is located here.
10	District employee	Little interest	Unsure	No	No not right now my district supervisors said they needed more information.
11	District employee	Some interest	Yes, several	Yes	Some voiced concerns that they have used other soil amendments that came a long and they did more harm than good.
12	District employee	Little interest	No	No	None
13	District employee	Too early to tell	No	No	The division should have been more upfront on the \$300,000 contribution from rollover funds is not just one time (we have since learned it will be recurring).
14	District employee	Unsure	Unsure	Neutral	None
15	District employee	Unsure	No	Neutral	My Board did not think that it would be something that our farmers would be interested in.
16	District employee	Little interest	Yes, a few	Neutral	I would be concerned if this trial BMP funding would pull funding away from any district's allocation this year or future year. If a district is interested in contracting with a cooperator for this BMP, it should be contracted from their allocation. We would be happy to work with a farm that would like to apply biochar but would treat it like a cost share contract. No need for a unique program with dedicated funding. ACSP has the structure to add this BMP as it is. If there is special funding dedicated to only this BMP, then add it to ACSP for the applicable counties like previous years' hurricanes and drought fundings were made available. Same rules, same staff, same paperwork.
17	District employee	Little interest	No	No	The 12.8 MILLION dollar grant for biochar is way more than the 4 million dollars appropriated for cost share. Why is Cost Share subsidizing the biochar movement that has been accelerated out of nowhere? We need to see an economic analysis that relates the cost of everything from producs, to transportation to spreading and incorporating the biochar versus what you actually get (nutrients, organic matter, pH adjustment etc). There needs to be trials where with a picture you can see half of a field as a control and the other half where biochar has been applied with some visual differences.
18	District employee	Some interest	Unsure	No	My main concern is that biochar seems to be more in line with soil health rather than water quality.
19	District employee	Too early to tell	Unsure	No	I think more research should be done for viable alternatives
20	District supervisor	Strong interest	Unsure	Yes	i have at least 3 farms interested and likley more as one of the farms is an opinion leader for the others
21	District employee	Little interest	No	No	Please do not redirect the roll over funds to Biochar. Yes, its a great program, but there still remains much need for additional ACSP in many districts. There are other ACSP programs that would benefit more if these additional funds stayed in ASCP and were not redirected to Biochar.
22	District supervisor	Little interest	No	No	do not redirect roll over funds.
23	District supervisor	Little interest	No	No	do not redirect roll over funds
24	District supervisor	Little interest	No	No	do not redirect roll over funds.
25	District supervisor	Little interest	No	No	Do not redirect roll over funds. Needs to be placed into strap for eastern nc.
26	District supervisor	Unsure	No	No	Leave money in 2027 ACSP dent move to Biochar.
27	District employee	Some interest	Yes, a few	No	None at this time

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28	District supervisor	Unsure	Unsure	No	The Lee County board feels that they do not have enough information or insight on the topic of biochar. Because there is not enough information and it has become such a hot topic all of the sudden the board believes money shouldn't be taken out of the cost-share fund pool to use for the implementation of biochar. If funds are needed for this project the money should be taken from elsewhere, grants and other pools of money, and not taken from the cost-share pool. The board feels that this would be taking money away from farmers that could benefit from the use of the money in the cost-share program. The board would like to see specific and long-term results from the implementation of biochar before they would consider using money from this pool to fund the biochar implementation. The members of this board are skeptical as to the actual improvements that biochar could make as a soil amendment and has seen first hand the failed results of other wood-chip type soil amendments to local crop and pasture land. Members of the board feeling as if this is being rushed and the agenda pushed quickly so that there isn't time for adequate research/learning of the topic and not enough time to give constructive feedback. The feedback was due before most boards have their next meeting as a board so there isn't time to adequately discuss. The board feels that this is not conducive to creating an environment for relevant discussion, thought-processing time, and supportive feedback to the division/commission.
29	District supervisor	Little interest	No	No	Worried that no Magnesium will be supplied and excess Carbon will tie up nutrients
30	District supervisor	Too early to tell	No	Yes	The cost to transport the biochar is a concern. The producers who are closest to the manufacturers of biochar would benefit the most since transportation costs would be less for them than for those producers who are further away. Maybe the funding should be more the longer the distance to the producer.
31	District employee	Little interest	No	No	Scotland does not have any interest in this should keep Ag Cost Share funds like they are
32	District supervisor	Little interest	No	No	We spend all our cost share funds every year and request more. We can use this here. Do not send possible cost share dollars to a new test program. We will not receive more from the general assembly so do not give away a penny of what we have access to.
33	District employee	Little interest	No	No	Never reallocate cost share funds anywhere else except to districts.
34	District employee	Little interest	Yes, a few	Yes	I would prefer the \$300,000 be implementing toward biochar this year rather than having a lower cut on cost-share next year.
35	District employee	Too early to tell	Yes, a few	No	Funds will be better used with current cost share programs/bmps
36	District supervisor	Little interest	No	No	We are concerned about transportation cost and need here.
37	District employee	Little interest	No	No	At this time, the small number of potential biochar applicants would not make up for the loss in cost share funding that we could use for other, more cost effective practices.
38	District supervisor	Little interest	No	No	No
39	District supervisor	Little interest	No	No	What little money stanly county gets it doesn't need to have money taken away to fund Biochar
40	District supervisor	Too early to tell	No	No	The districts do not get enough cost share funds as it is and then taking money to fund this request does not seem appropriate.
41	District employee	Some interest	Yes, a few	Neutral	With this being a new program, farmers will want to see the benefits of this practice. Having the before and after soil results as an example will be helpful when explaining this practice to farmers.
42	District supervisor	Little interest	No	No	My interaction with producers show they have no interest. They also indicate that they many questions that have not been addressed .
43	District supervisor	Little interest	No	No	The Board has not been satisfied with the need for biochar in our area. The Board has too many questions with little answers. The Board is concerned how this will impact cost share funding. The Board cannot support or endorse this program at this time.
44	District employee	Too early to tell	Yes, a few	No	My supervisor discussed this with me last night at our meeting. These items mark are their thoughts.
45	District supervisor	Little interest	No	No	I think it should stay with cost share
46	District supervisor	Little interest	No	No	Please do not use District funds for this project.
47	District supervisor	Little interest	No	No	Prefer to have c/s funds remain in ACSP PY27
48	District employee	Little interest	Yes, a few	No	Concerned that it will take limited funding away from valuable BMP's - especially those dealing with Animal Waste.
49	District employee	Little interest	No	No	It would not help Camden County due to half the county being deep organic or wet natured soil. We could spend that money on other cost share BMP's.
50	District employee	Little interest	No	No	No need in our district, not enough research
51	District employee	Little interest	No	No	Not efficient use of cost share dollars at this time
52	District employee	Little interest	No	No	Biochar funds need to come from another funding source not ag cost share.
53	District supervisor	Unsure	Yes, a few	No	This survey was done by Board members. Interested in Biochar once more information is available and how the cost share will be affected.
54	District employee	Strong interest	Yes, several	Yes	Timing to apply may be difficult due to cropping rotations. Will be a short window that could be affected by weather.
55	Partner	Strong interest	Yes, several	Yes	biochar has been around forever
56	District employee	Some interest	Yes, a few	Neutral	The main concern in our area will be if it will be economically feasible for our producers. There is interest in the process but the cost is a major question at this time.
57	District supervisor	Some interest	Yes, a few	No	No additional comments
58	District supervisor	Little interest	No	No	The cost of shipping this outweighs the return to investment

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59	District supervisor	Little interest	No	No	It has taken many years to get an extra 2 million dollars for Ag Cost Share and that is where it needs to be used.
60	District employee	Little interest	No	No	In Rowan County our soils do not really fit the criteria for the use of Biochar. 90% of our farmers are already practicing the best management practice of no till and cover crops, which is already building organic matter in the soil. If other districts would like to give their money to the use of Biochar and it will benefit them, then they should be allowed to. I believe that our county should be able to use the cost share funds to continue promoting best management practices in Rowan County.
61	District employee	Little interest	No	No	I DON'T support the Commission wanting to take \$300,000 from our FY 2027 ACSP Funds for biochar bmp implementation at all!! The Legislatures voted to give ACSP \$2 million more this year and it was designated to be used for the Ag Cost Share Program Funding. It was NOT earmarked for the Commission to decide to take \$300K from it for biochar use!! Please leave the \$2 million the Legislatures gave us for ACSP Funding alone!!
62	District employee	Too early to tell	Unsure	No	Would like to see funds allocated to cost share actually be used for cost share. Have plenty of potential projects in need of more funding. Worried how this would affect future years allocations.
63	District employee	Some interest	Yes, a few	Yes	N/A
64	District employee	Too early to tell	No	Neutral	We do not have a lot of "early adopter farmers", so it may take some time for them to see it work before they are willing to take the risk, but we will advertise it and be glad to help farmers interested.
65	District supervisor	Little interest	No	No	Rowan SWCD Board does not support this action, and discussed this in length in our August Board meeting.
66	District supervisor	Too early to tell	No	No	I feel this money should stay in cost share as it was allocated by the state budget.
67	Partner	Unsure	Unsure	Neutral	It seems there is some push-back for the biochar initiative and ability for cost share programming due to lack of knowledge and understanding of the district staff, supervisors, and local cooperators. I have heard many people question the efficacy of utilizing biochar; it seems there is doubt only due to lack of information/knowledge. Hosting this biochar webinar was a great way to disseminate accurate information for districts to share with cooperators. Hosting more webinars and/or questions and answer sessions related to the biochar initiative will only help increase understanding of the initiative and therefore increase potential cooperator participation.
68	District employee	Unsure	No	No	I want to see a study that relates the inputs (\$) from the processing and hauling of the biochar versus what you get (organic matter and nutrients). I would also like to see some fields where have had biochar applied and later look at the differences in plant growth.
69	District supervisor	Some interest	Yes, several	No	We would like the \$300,000 returned to the ag cost share program to be allocated to districts so districts can decide how to spend the funds.
70	District supervisor	Some interest	Yes, a few	Yes	My answer depends on where the \$300,000 is coming from. If it is pulled from another needed program, I may not agree.
71	District employee	Too early to tell	Unsure	Neutral	While I am sure Biochar is great and will be a much needed addition to our BMP list to help farmers. I hate to reduce funding on other potential projects. I will admit it is early in the stage for Biochar and can see the potential for great use, as with any new process finding the correct producers and getting them on board will take a little time, but could prove to be beneficial in the end.
72	District supervisor	Too early to tell	Yes, a few	No	This response is from the Orange County Board as a whole. Our preference is for the funds to be allocated to the Districts. Once biochar is an approved BMP through ACSP then Districts can make the decision on whether to allocate funds to biochar projects on the local level. More time and research is needed to discern the level of interest with Orange County producers and where the product can be sourced for our farmers. Additional training is needed for staff to write nutrient management plans for the material and make recommendations on the application.
73	District employee	Too early to tell	Yes, a few	No	I think directing rollover funds to a single BMP deviates from the intention of ACSP implementation being locally-led in each district. I understand wanting to increase the rate to incentivize utilization of this BMP, but it doesn't seem right to reduce district allocations to fund a single BMP that may not be used across all districts. This option was not available (that I know of) in past years for other BMPs that did not pay enough to cover increasing costs - well drilling is a good example. While I am fully supportive of Biochar as a new BMP, I believe using the rollover funds for a single BMP will set a precedent for prioritizing BMPs at the state level, which is not in line with locally-led conservation planning and BMP implementation.
74	District employee	Too early to tell	No	No	None
75	District employee	Too early to tell	Yes, a few	No	I don't think we should use any ACSP funds for this. Funding should come from some other source.
76	District employee	Little interest	Unsure	Neutral	I feel that the rollover funds should be allocated to existing BMPs before allocation to a practice that has not yet been approved
77	District employee	Little interest	No	No	Funding should be directed to cost share program. Biochar is not even approved practice for cost share. More info on biochar and trials should be conducted to prove its worth. From all I have read biochar needs to be charged with nutrients before use, that would be an added expense, but not mentioned in trainings.
78	District employee	Some interest	Yes, several	Yes	Not at this time.
79	District employee	Too early to tell	Unsure	Neutral	If the program already has \$12million and we are unsure if it'll work as a cost share program I don't really understand needing the \$300,000.

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80	District employee	Little interest	Yes, a few	Neutral	The use of rollover funds this fiscal year doesn't bother me since we got the additional \$2 million, we didn't see a negative impact on our allocation. I would be concerned if it became a recurring thing to come out of the rollover funds and we got less of an allocation than what should be normal. My other concern is just the cost of getting the practice on the ground here. If there aren't any local distributors supplying biochar here, I worry that the cost of getting it trucked up outpaces the relief a cost share contract would provide. My other thought is about the contracting process, it has potential to get backed up and be slow until people get JAA for it. Would it be feasible to do a big training for it where at the end the people who attend would get JAA? That would help streamline getting the practice on the ground so that every contract isn't getting reviewed by only a couple people.
81	District employee	Little interest	Yes, several	Yes	I support the use of roll-over funds for Biochar implementation but wonder if it's an aggressive amount to start with. I have some concern that districts that are not located near a biochar production facility will be at a disadvantage with less producer interest. I think a large-scale, multi day training with the opportunity to get JAA would be beneficial to program roll-out. I also think some sort of handout/fact sheet to provide producers or educate producers with could be helpful to get buy-in especially as a lot of technical staff is not experienced with biochar yet.
82	District supervisor	Some interest	Yes, several	Yes	Redirecting cost-share funds
83	District supervisor	Too early to tell	No	Neutral	Limited application to our county
84	District employee	Little interest	No	No	I believe these funds would be better used for other costshare programs
85	District employee	Too early to tell	Unsure	Neutral	First I would like to say I am definitely excited about paving the way. However, in this area pretty much everything has animal waste applied. It seems as if woody debris biochar may be somewhat beneficial; however, on conventionally tilled truck crop fields will it help build anything? Folks not doing truck crops are moving toward residue & tillage management with cover crop. As far as managing the P, Zn, and Cu that can be done through managing the pH with Lime. We need a way to use the P, Zn, and Cu to get it out of the soil. Will transporting biochar from the Western part of the state with cost share be cheaper than Lime and help build organic matter? I don't know. I would rather see western counties utilize it to build soil back up from the storm damage, then maybe do some pilot counties for those further East to see if the benefits are there. As far as the money, we have a waiting list for conservation practices so I would like as much cost share as I can get. Until we see how much interest and how much this will cost per contract we don't know how much to ear mark. I am okay with you holding that amount, but if not used will it roll back into cost share for spring reallocations?
86	District employee	Too early to tell	No	Neutral	I think this could have a successful outcome in the future. But I also see it could be difficult to convince some farmers in counties farther away from sites producing BioChar. Hauling prices are entirely too high in todays world and the ACSP Price does nothing to consider the hauling prices. Therefore, I am neutral when it comes to Biochar. Some counties may benefit while other counties not so much right now, but possibly in the future.
87	District employee	Too early to tell	Yes, several	Yes	Are you preparing (or do you already have) a factsheet with background info (in layman's terms) to explain biochar and the benefits of biochar application? Something like that would go a long way in helping the districts get the word out about the practice and gauge local interest in it. Got a poster or handout? That'd work just as well! PS: The "District" field in this form is formatted for email
88	District employee	Too early to tell	Yes, several	Neutral	na
89	District supervisor	Strong interest	No	Yes	Mecklenburg has very few large scale farming operations, although there are many small farms and growers that are interested in biochar
90	District employee	Too early to tell	Yes, a few	No	More research is needed. *Amount of time needed for biochar to break down completely? Especially if you are suggesting adding wood chips to the top. *Application of Biochar on soils that are already high in phosphorus and metals is a large concern of mine. * It is being advertised as a solution instead of the byproduct that it is. * Nitrogen is already expensive farmers aren't going to want something else taking it up. * Effects on root vegetables like potatoes, phytotoxicity. *Not climate friendly.
91	District employee	Little interest	No	No	I do not fully support taking monies from districts.
92	District employee	Some interest	Yes, a few	No	3 farmers showed interest, only one followed through. The Yancey County Extension has a free source.

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93	District employee	Too early to tell	Yes, a few	Yes	I think for the folks east of I-95 you will need to get someone that is respected in the area on board and demonstrating benefits before there is going to be a lot of interest in the area. Most of the comments I've heard is it was just a way to pump more money to Western part of the state. I understand the need for it after Helene as seeing the destruction and debris that was left over firsthand. But most of the folks that are skeptical haven't left this area in a long time. So, to have somewhere they can see and hear from someone closer would be beneficial.
94	District supervisor	Strong interest	Yes, a few	Yes	mathis to advertise this as a regenerative practice may appeal to other urban organic farms
95	District employee	Little interest	Yes, a few	Neutral	The one producer I know of in our District who has tried biochar had a negative experience- the biochar was contaminated with uncombusted diesel. This experience led him to discontinue using biochar.
96	District employee	Little interest	Yes, a few	No	The funding is for the NCACSP BMP's. Biochar isn't a current BMP. Our District is losing \$5,000 because of the directing of the \$300,000. I'm not opposed to Biochar (I need to see more documentation of the benefits), it's just that I do not think this fits into the directive of the water quality program. Also, the funding for NCACSP has been at \$4 million for nearly 30 years without an increase. The program gets \$2 million (I realize at this point it is non-reoccurring) and then a portion is being used for a BMP that is not in the program.
97	District employee	Too early to tell	Unsure	No	I do not support using any regular ACSP funding for the biochar program.
98	District employee	Little interest	No		Unclear on monitoring results, the application process, how easy it will be to source.
99	District employee	Some interest	Yes, several	Yes	Glad that biochar has some funding! There are some producers in Gaston that are very interested in implementing but some are still doubtful that it will be effective
100	Partner	Some interest	Yes, a few	Yes	.
101	District supervisor	Little interest	Yes, a few	No	Not enough information in hand to promote this program to local farmers. Lots of variables.
102	District employee	Too early to tell	Unsure	No	The division shouldn't take cost share funds away from districts for a new idea that has too many questions to know whether it is worthwhile or not.
103	District supervisor	Little interest	No	Yes	More education like the webinar would help clear a lot of questions up. Many believe we are short-changing the cost share program.
104	District supervisor	Some interest	Yes, several	Yes	None
105	District supervisor	Too early to tell	Yes, a few	Neutral	It needs to be very clear that this is currently a 3 year project. Education will be essential for producer support. Now understand why District funding was reduced for 2027. Larger problem is that the need for cost-share assistance exceeds resources available already.