

Reviving ancient wisdom

Freisl Kraftfutter GmbH, a family-run animal feed mill with roots dating back to 1020, is at the forefront of integrating ancient agricultural practices into modern farming. The sixth-generation managing director Ignaz Freisl emphasizes the importance of sustainability and innovation, particularly through the use of black carbon. This modern application of ancient farming knowledge not only enhances soil fertility but also addresses pressing environmental concerns.

A new biochar facility is soon to be built at the historic livestock feed mill

Black carbon, or biochar, plays a crucial role in soil health. "We lose massive amounts of carbon from our soils due to unsustainable farming practices," states Ignaz Freisl. The loss of humus not only diminishes soil fertility but also contributes to atmospheric carbon levels. By reintroducing carbon into the soil, Ignaz Freisl aims to create a more sustainable agricultural ecosystem. "The carbon acts as a bridge between the soil's minerals and its living organisms, essential for a thriving ecosystem," he notes.

The Terra Preta connection

Terra Preta, or 'black earth' is a type of fertile soil found in the Amazon Basin, created by indigenous farming communities. It is characterized by high concentrations of charcoal, organic matter, and nutrients. "Terra Preta soils were developed over thousands

Freisl Kraftfutter supplies its longstanding customers across southern Bavaria with high-quality animal feed

of years and can retain nutrients and moisture far better than conventional soils," enthuses Ignaz Freisl. This ancient knowledge informs his approach to modern agriculture, where he incorporates black carbon into animal feed.

Benefits of biochar

Ignaz Freisl has been utilizing biochar in livestock feed since 2015, recognizing its multifaceted benefits. "By feeding animals biochar, we can improve their health while simultaneously enriching the soil when they excrete," he explains. This process not only enhances nutrient retention in the soil but also mitigates issues such as soil acidification and nutrient leaching. Over time, the use of biochar

can lead to a reduction in fertilizer needs, ultimately benefiting both farmers and the environment.

Sustainable farming practices

Ignaz Freisl envisions a future where sustainable practices become the norm in agriculture. "We have the technology and knowledge; what we need now is political will and investment," he states. His wife, who comes from a gardening family and has a background in biology, is actively applying these sustainable practices on their smallholding. Together, they are reactivating their garden spaces and utilizing biochar to enhance soil health, demonstrating the effectiveness

INTERVIEW WITH



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of these methods in producing high-quality, organic vegetables.

Challenges and opportunities

Despite the clear benefits, Ignaz Freisl acknowledges the challenges of promoting biochar in traditional farming communities. "Many farmers are hesitant to adopt new practices," he admits. To address this, Freisl Kraftfutter engages in educational initiatives, offering workshops and farm tours to demonstrate the tangible benefits of their methods. "People have to see it to believe it," he asserts.

