

The Science and Practice of Agricultural Soil Carbon Offsets

A Webinar

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Public Agenda

As the United States embarks on a path towards net-zero carbon emissions, many entities are considering agriculture-based carbon offsets to reach their net-zero emissions goals. However, the measurement of carbon uptake in soil is not documented in a standardized way in current offset markets, and large questions remain about incentives, additionality, permanence, and monitoring and verification.

As part of input gathering for their upcoming report, the committee on [Accelerating Decarbonization in the United States: Technology, Policy, and Societal Dimensions](#) invites you to join them for a discussion on the ability of the private sector to deliver meaningful agricultural soil carbon offsets in the United States, the status of markets around soil carbon, and whether / what type of government policy might improve outcomes. This session will hear from scientists, nonprofits, and government agencies, as well as from speakers connected with the financial sector and from private institutions seeking to attain documentable emissions reductions via an offset market.

MONDAY, JUNE 6, 2022

2:00 PM ET¹ **Welcome and Opening Remarks**
Keith Paustian, Colorado State University

2:05 PM **Presentations from Speakers**
David Antonioli, Verra
Emily Oldfield, Environmental Defense Fund
Owen Hewlett, Gold Standard
Bill Hohenstein, USDA
Elizabeth Willmott, Microsoft
AJ Kumar, Indigo Ag

3:00 PM **Questions and Discussion with Speakers from National Academies Committee Members and Public Audience**

4:00 PM **Adjourn**

¹ All times are in Eastern Standard Time

Speaker Biographies



David Antonioli serves as Chief Executive Officer of Verra where he oversees all aspects of the organization, including ensuring the financial and operational health of the organization and that the organization's certification programs meet high quality integrity and transparency standards. A world-renowned expert on climate change, David began his work in this sector when he worked for ICF Consulting in 1994 providing technical advice to Latin American countries developing their GHG inventories and serving on the team that pioneered verification procedures for emission reduction projects. In 1999 David joined the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Mexico as its global climate change advisor overseeing the development of an energy-sector grid emission factor and baseline studies for forest protection efforts. In 2003, David joined EcoSecurities in Oxford (UK) where he led a joint venture to develop landfill gas-to-energy projects under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). At EcoSecurities David also spearheaded the company's efforts in the voluntary market, helping to identify key infrastructure and procedural needs that the voluntary carbon market lacked in the early days of its existence. David holds a Bachelor's degree in Sociology from Princeton University and a Master's in Public Policy, with concentrations in Environmental Policy and International Development, from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.



Owen Hewlett is the Chief Technical Officer of the Gold Standard Foundation, a high quality and integrity certification scheme for climate and sustainable development action. Owen is an expert in voluntary and compliance carbon markets and Article 6 of the Paris Agreement and a leading expert in corporate and national inventory accounting. Owen was a member of the Science Based Targets Net Zero and Greenhouse Gas Protocol Advisory Groups and co-founded the 'Value Change Initiative' for Scope 3.

William Hohenstein is the Director of USDA's Office of Energy and Environmental Policy, within the Office of the Chief Economist. Office of Energy and Environmental Policy (OEEP) coordinates policy analysis, long-range planning, research priority setting, and response strategies for addressing climate change, energy production and use, and environmental policy. OEEP houses the Office of Energy Policy and New Uses (OEPNU), the Office of Environmental Markets (OEM), and the Climate Change Program Office (CCPO). The office focuses on efforts to enhance USDA's ability to evaluate renewable energy and resources, build climate resilient and sustainable farms, ranches, rural lands and rural communities, expand markets for conservation and environmental goods, and support farmer conservation decision-making.

Before arriving at USDA, Mr. Hohenstein served as a Division Director in EPA's National Center for Environmental Economics. Prior to that, Mr. Hohenstein served in the Climate Change Division of EPA's Office of Policy Planning and Evaluation where he oversaw EPA's greenhouse gas inventory program. Mr. Hohenstein has a B.S. in Natural Resource Management from Cook College, Rutgers University and a M.E.M. in Resource Economics and Policy from Duke University's School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

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Dr. A.J. Kumar is an experienced science manager and technology developer. He leads the Carbon Science and Modeling team at Indigo including the overall scientific strategy in coordination with key experts, the design of large-scale field trials to study regenerative agricultural systems potential for sequestering carbon in soil, technology exploration to identify ground-breaking technologies to enable carbon markets to scale faster. Prior to Indigo, A.J. was the Chief Scientific Officer at Jana Care where he built the R&D team in Boston from the ground up, and led the development of multiple low-cost, point-of-care rapid blood tests for chronic diseases, including partnerships with companies such as AstraZeneca. He has a PhD in Applied Physics from Harvard University and a BS in Physics from Stanford University. He has authored over 20 publications and is an inventor on 10 patents and patent applications.



Emily Oldfield is an Agricultural Soil Carbon Scientist at the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF). Emily's expertise is in soil organic matter dynamics. Her work has focused on quantifying the agronomic and environmental benefits of building soil carbon and soil organic matter in agricultural landscapes. Emily's work at EDF focuses on quantifying the realistic potential of agricultural soils to contribute to climate mitigation and to ensure that the voluntary carbon market is supported by a strong scientific foundation.



Elizabeth Willmott leads the carbon strategy at Microsoft. She designed the company's carbon negative commitment, as well as the first generation of its carbon removal program. Before joining Microsoft in 2016, she worked for a decade in the public and nonprofit sectors on urban sustainability and climate action. She has an academic background in biology, Chinese language, and public policy.