

# ABC Rural

## CSIRO to investigate claims that brown coal ingredient boosts soil carbon

Tuesday, 01/06/2010

The CSIRO will investigate claims that an ingredient of brown coal, or lignite, can greatly boost soil carbon when used in fertiliser.

The company Lawrie Co from South Australia has been using the humic acid in lignite in its fertilisers for ten years.

Now scientists from the CSIRO's Sustainable Agriculture Flagship will incorporate 30 farm sites using this fertiliser, in Western Australia, South Australia and Victoria, in a large national study of soil carbon.

CSIRO's decision comes after Lawrie Co presented more information at a soil carbon conference last week.

Lawrie Co founder Adrian Lawrie is hopeful that the CSIRO will include it in a national program and reduce the cost to the farmers.

"We've got an example of 300,000 hectares of farmers adopting a new farming technology that now has creditable evidence, admittedly anecdotal but nevertheless accumulated over ten years of improving soil organic carbon," he says.

"(Our view is that the) 300 farmers over 300,000 hectares deserve community support, via the Federal Government, for the CSIRO to investigate the innovative technology that they have adopted."