



BBioNets
Boosting the adoption
of Bio-Based Technologies

Cross-Fertilisation Meetings

Bio-Based Practices on Farms & Forests

“Innovations in Nutrient Recovery”

Integrating Biochar in Swine Feed: A Sustainable Approach to Enhancing Livestock Production and Environmental Management

Dr. Apostolos Malamakis, iBO/CERTH

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Outline

- Introduction: Overall approach
- Methodology:
 - Biomass potential surveying through UAVs
 - Biochar production process
 - Pilot use of biochar as pig feed supplement
- Potential benefits of biochar as pig feed supplement
- Added value of the ongoing research

Scope of the research

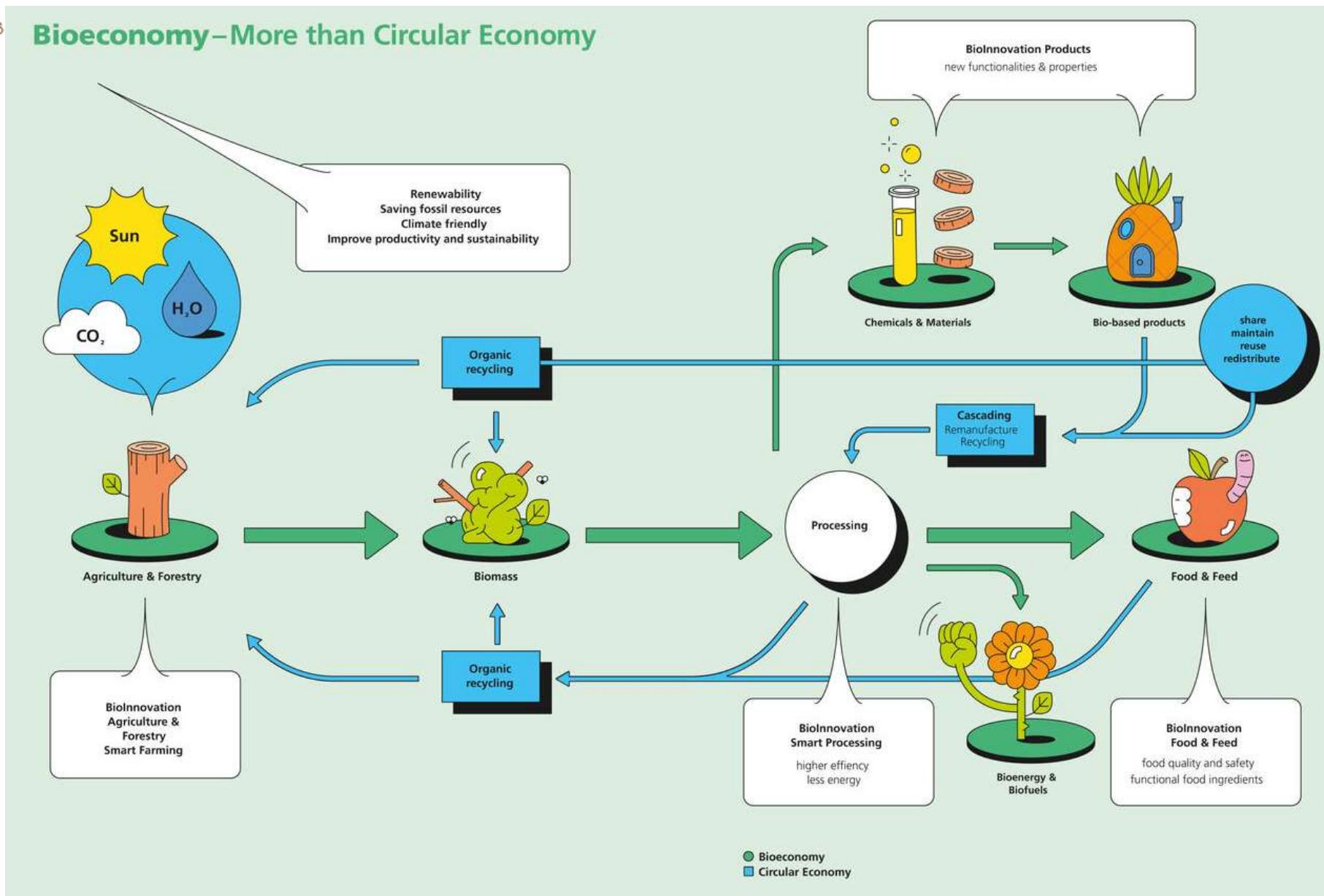
- Greek pig farming is one of the most dynamic branches of development of the country's agricultural economy.
- Despite significant improvements in recent years, all pig farms show weaknesses, which are mostly related to the farm feed supplied (such as the cost of rearing and poor quality feed).
- Feeding of untested and poorly targeted agricultural feed to pigs leads to significant problems related to:
 - the performance of the livestock unit (low rate of weight gain of the animals),
 - the well-being of the animals (frequent food poisoning due to toxins or pathogens found in the feed),
 - the operation of the livestock facility (increase of greenhouse gases (GHG) from animal faeces due to poor digestion), and
 - the quality of the final product (pathogens or antibiotics administered end up in pork and from there to the consumer).
- Aim of this research is to utilize agricultural biomass by-products to create a new (low-cost) feed supplement based on biochar, which will lead to a significant improvement in the quality of pig feed, and, consequently, in increasing the competitiveness of Greek pig farming internationally.



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Circular (bio-)economy

BioAnimalChar

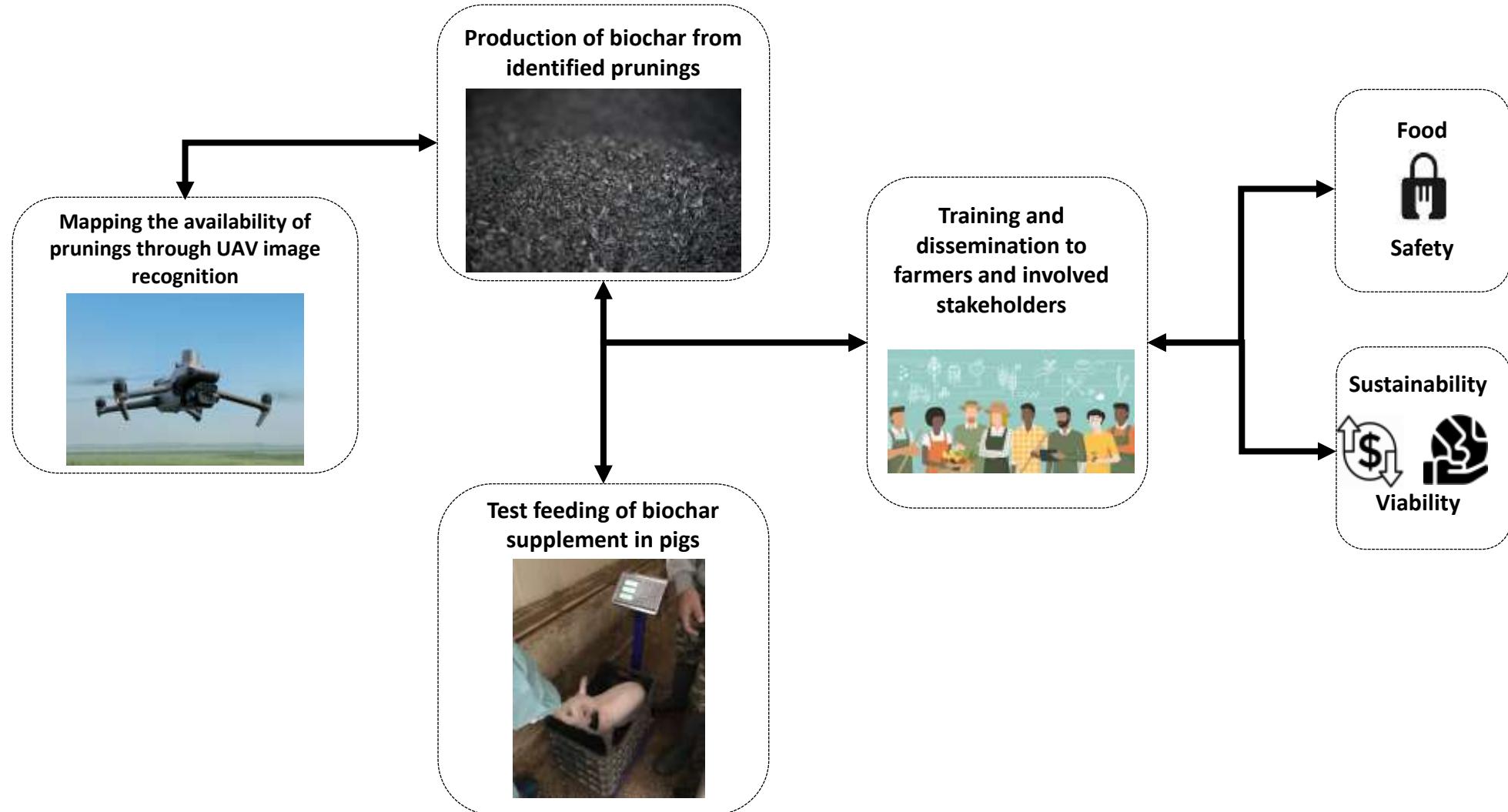




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Overall approach

BioAnimalChar

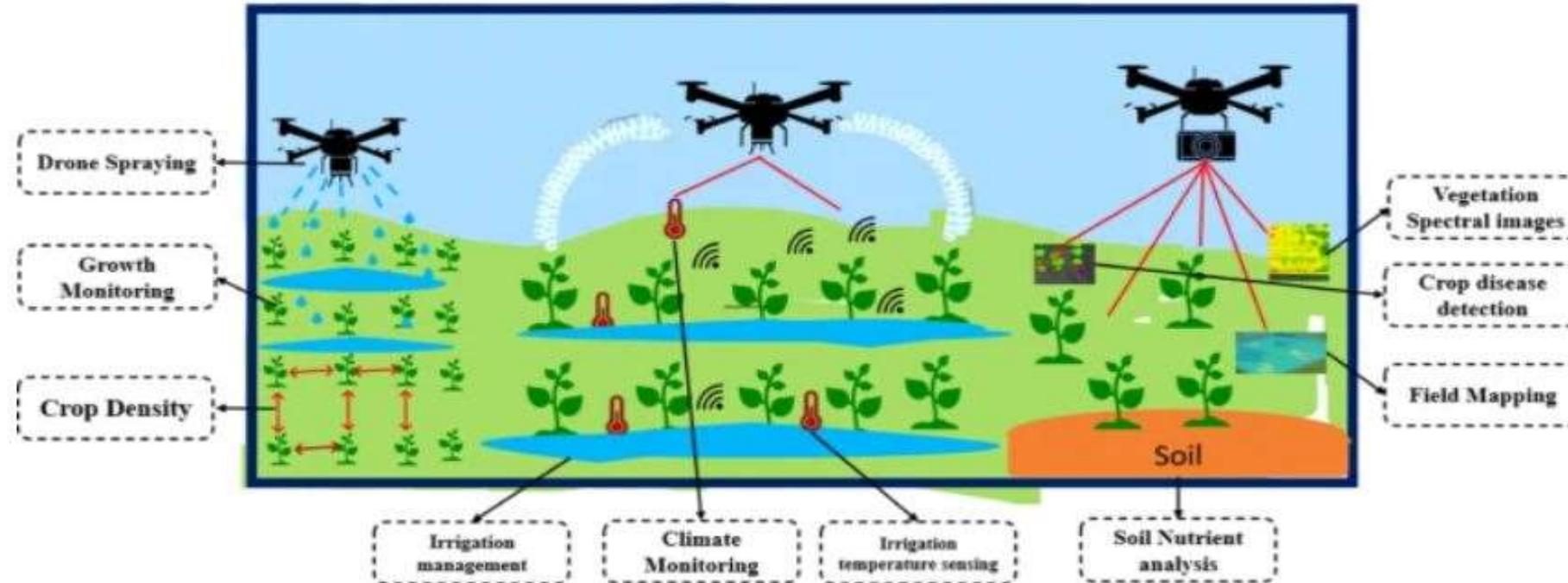




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UAVs in Agriculture – smart agriculture

BioAnimalChar





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BioAnimalChar

Test field

18/12/2025

Bio-Based Practices





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On-site use of UAV for biomass estimation **BioAnimalChar**

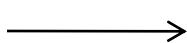




Methodology

- Collection of imaging data
- Image processing steps (image alignment and feature matching)
- Generation of a 3D point cloud representing ground and object surfaces
- Creation of the Digital Surface Model (DSM) and Digital Terrain Model (DTM)
- Production of the Orthomosaic





DJI Mavic 3 Pro





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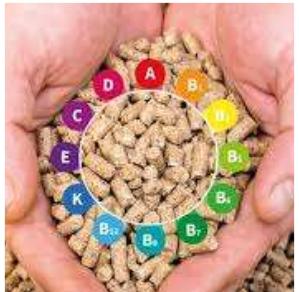
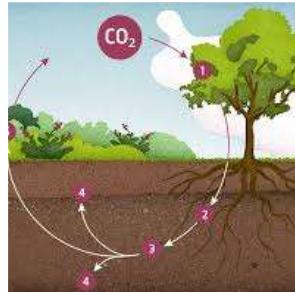


Soil amendment

- Increased water and nutrient retention

Carbon Storage

- Curve CO₂ emissions



Feed supplement

- What BioAnimalChar does!

Pyrolysis

- Thermal treatment to produce biochar

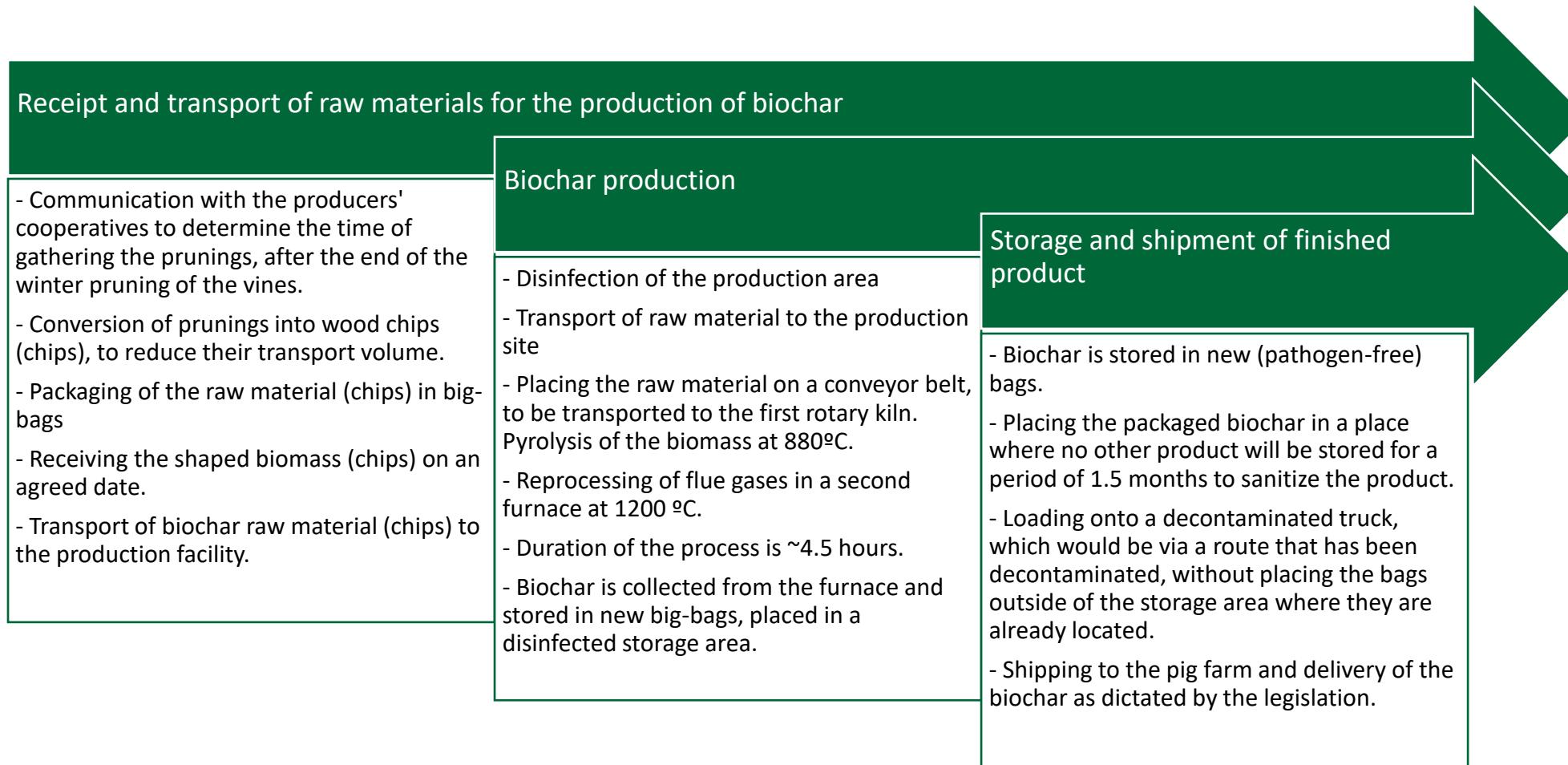


BioAnimalChar

Biochar Production



Biochar production process





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Pilot use of biochar as pig feed supplement

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Receipt and storage of biochar

- Receiving biochar from the production facility according to farm manager instructions, to ensure all hygiene rules and avoid possible contamination of the farm.
- Store the product in a place where it will be protected from high temperature, humidity, insects and rodents.

Feeding the pigs

- Separation of two groups of fattening pigs (10-20 animals) of the same age.
- Feeding a group with feed containing biochar based on the feeding protocol to be established.
- Feeding the other group with food that does not contain biochar.

Testing procedure

- Weighing of pigs at regular intervals based on protocol.
- Constant health check of the pigs, to establish their normal development.
- Biochemical analysis on the meat products to determine if there is an improvement in the final product characteristics.

- Beneficial features of using biochar in pig farming:
 - Increase in animal weight with the use of 1% biochar in pig feed
 - Improvement of feed to animal weight conversion index
 - Improving the composition of fatty acids in the animal's flesh (increasing unsaturated and decreasing saturated fatty acids)
- Reduction of pathogenic bacteria in animal manure.
- Reduction of triglycerides and urea in the blood of animals.
- Weight gain and better functioning of the immune system with the use of 0.3%-3% biochar in animal nutrition.
- Biochar has a mycobinding effect, reducing the concentration of fungi in animal feed

Added value of the ongoing research **BioAnimalChar**

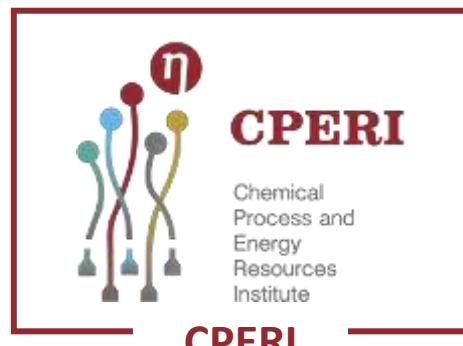
- Address significant challenges in livestock farming due to uncontrolled feed administration, utilizing biochar-based feed supplements to enhance pig farming—reducing toxins, improving digestion, and increasing feed use efficiency.
- Promote lower greenhouse gas emissions from pig manure, transforming agricultural prunings from waste to valuable products.
- Establish a unified communication language between agricultural feed providers and livestock feed recipients, fostering better operational harmony and efficiency.
- Target a market worth €180 million/year in primary pig production, expecting to cut pig-raising costs by 25% and increasing the value of pig meat by 10% through healthier, environmentally friendly products.
- Projected outcomes include healthier pig meat with less saturated fats and heavy metals, contributing to a reduced carbon footprint and advancing sustainability in the agricultural sector.



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CERTH in brief...

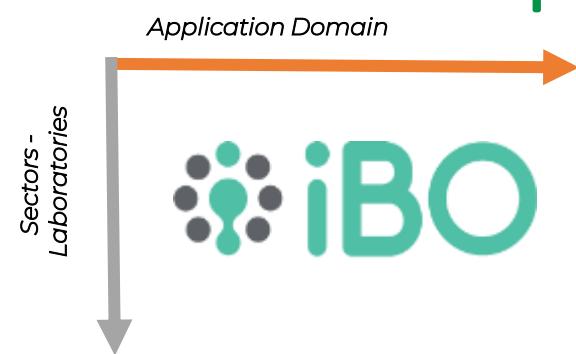
BioAnimalChar





Institute Structure & Scientific Approach

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AGRI-TECHNOLOGY SECTOR

Agri-Robotics & Artificial Intelligent

Agro-Informatics

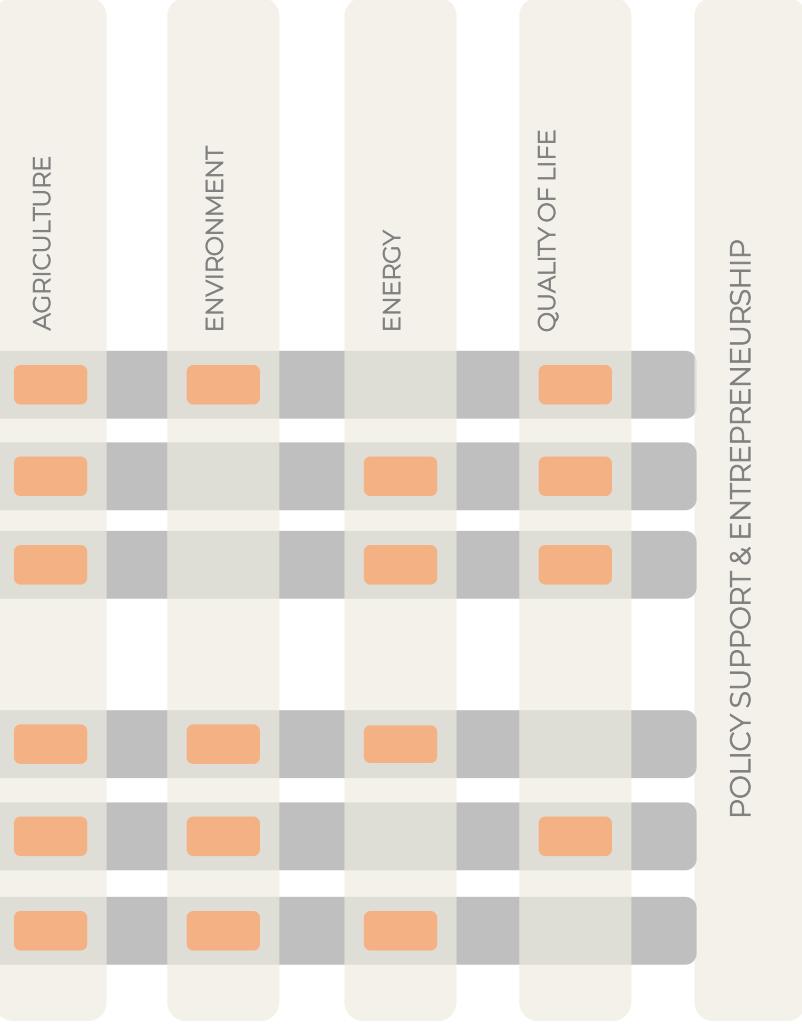
Controlled Bio-production Systems

BIO-ECONOMY SECTOR

Environmental Engineering & Sustainability

Ergonomics in Bio-production Systems

Bio-production Energy Systems



BioAnimalChar

POLICY SUPPORT & ENTREPRENEURSHIP



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Institute for Bio-Economy and Agri-Technology

Laboratory of Environmental Engineering and Sustainability



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Thank you!

Dr. Apostolos Malamakis, iBO/CERTH

a.malamakis@certh.gr

www.bbionets.eu

