Charcoal has always been a traditional remedy for digestive problems for humans and animals. It is increasingly being used as a regular supplement in livestock farming to improve animals’ health.\(^1\)

**HOW DOES IT WORK?**

Ingesting biochar works by trapping toxins and chemicals in the gut, preventing their absorption by the body.

**USES IN LIVESTOCK FARMING**

90% of the biochar produced in the UK is used in farming. It is:

- **Mixed in feed**
  
  Crushed biochar is mixed with (most commonly cattle’s) daily feed at a rate of 0.6-2% of their body weight\(^2\)

- **Added to litter or bedding**
  
  The biochar will quickly consume ammonia and urea, acting as a biofilter and reducing odours\(^3\)

- **Added to slurry**
  
  Studies report, when biochar is added to slurry, a reduced smell, and improved viscosity of slurry\(^4\), making a nutrient rich fertilizer\(^5\)

**WHY FEED LIVESTOCK WITH BIOCHAR?**

There is growing evidence that biochar helps:

- improves cattle gut digestion\(^6\)
- increases weight gain in livestock\(^7\)
- reduces methane released\(^8\)
- The biochar then goes into the animal dung and is then spread on the fields, improving soil health, and acting as beneficial carbon storage\(^9\)

**ACTIVATED CARBON OR BIOCHAR?**

Activated carbon is 5 – 10 times more expensive than simple biochar, so it is possible to use 2-3 times the amount of biochar to achieve the same result. Furthermore, activated carbon is often less sustainable in terms of production than biochar.

**WHICH ANIMALS BENEFIT?**

Biochar is most commonly fed to cattle, but has in some cases also been used successfully in goat, chicken, pig, duck and some fish feed.\(^10\)

**IS IT SAFE?**

Biochar produced under the European Biochar Certificate meets all the animal feed threshold values, under EC Regulation 178/2002 and the regulations for organic livestock feed under EC Regulation 834/2007.\(^11\)

The safety of biochar as a feed additive has been certified by Biocheck, a laboratory for veterinary diagnostics and environmental hygiene.\(^12\)