

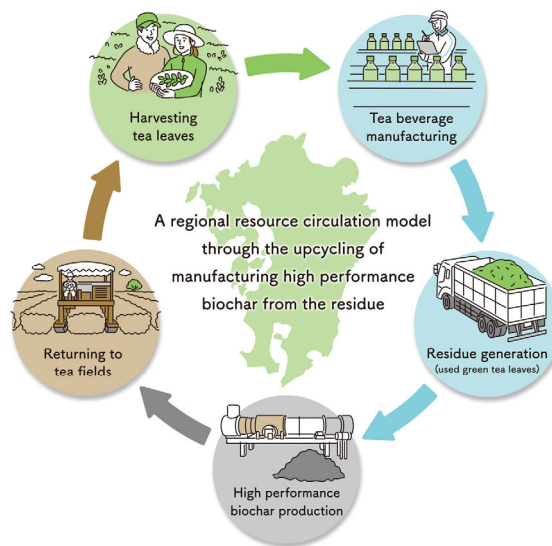
June 3, 2026

<news release>

Suntory Holdings Limited  
TOWING Co., Ltd.

## Suntory Holdings and TOWING Achieve Yield Improvements in High-Performance Biochar Pilot Tests

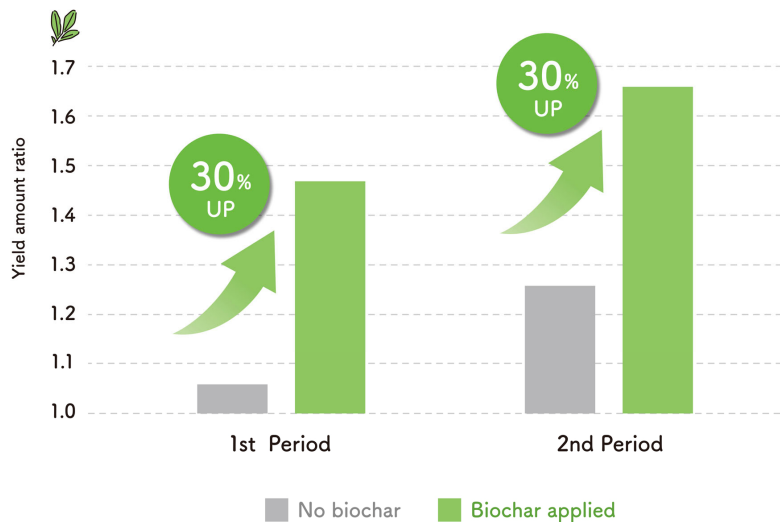
- Establishes a regional circulation model in the Kyushu region —
- Expands pilot tests of high-performance biochar in Thailand's sugarcane fields —



Tokyo, JAPAN (June 3, 2026) — Suntory Holdings and TOWING Co., Ltd., a green AgriTech startup, have announced that their joint pilot program exploring the potential of high-performance biochar\*<sup>1</sup> delivered approximately 30% yield improvements. Based on these results, the two companies will scale up production of high-performance biochar\*<sup>1</sup> from May 2026, aiming to establish a regional circulation model in the Kyushu region.

Since May 2025, Suntory and TOWING have conducted a pilot program aimed at creating new value through the upcycling of manufacturing byproducts, while also reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by using of high-performance biochar.

In the pilot program, biochar was produced by carbonizing beverage residues (used green tea leaves) from Suntory Group’s manufacturing processes, which was then combined with TOWING’s multifunctional microbial groups to create high-performance biochar. The resulting high-performance biochar was applied to tea plants\*2 at Suntory’s contract farm (see News Release [No.14813](#)).



The effect of high-performance biochar on yield in pilot tests  
(compared to the use of conventional organic fertilizers)

As a result, both the first and second harvests delivered yield increases of approximately 30% while maintaining quality of the crops, compared to the use of conventional organic fertilizers.

In light of these outcomes, the two companies have decided to scale up production of high-performance biochar derived from beverage residues. The biochar will be produced using beverage residues from Suntory’s beverage plants in the Kyushu region and applied at tea farms that supply raw ingredients. This approach will enable the establishment of a regional resource circulation model that recycles resources within the same area.

In addition, Suntory and TOWING are exploring opportunities to expand the potential of high-performance biochar outside of Japan. Since 2025, the two companies have been conducting a pilot program in Thailand —now in its second phase— in which high-performance biochar produced from rice husks is applied to sugarcane fields.

In Southeast Asia, including Thailand, the open burning of agricultural residues has led to air pollution and remains a significant environmental challenge. Through this initiative, Suntory and TOWING aim not only to stabilize crop yields, but also to help address regional environmental issues and contribute to the reduction of GHG emissions.



Suntory has been recycling 100% of its manufacturing residues in repurposing them as animal feed and fertilizers. In recent years, it has further positioned upcycling as a key priority, promoting initiatives that realize a circular economy. The Group has also long supported regenerative agriculture<sup>\*3</sup> as one way to reduce GHG emissions in the agricultural sector. The group collaborates with suppliers and contract farmers to transition to more sustainable farming practices, such as cover cropping<sup>\*4</sup>, organic fertilization, and no-till farming. Notable projects include [barley cultivation in the UK](#) (2022) and [sugarcane cultivation in Thailand](#) (2024). Looking ahead, as the large-scale production and adoption of materials such as high-performance biochar advances, Suntory believes these efforts will contribute to reducing GHG emissions in agriculture by suppressing the use of chemical fertilizers, improving crop yields with organic fertilizer cultivation, and promoting resource circulation through the upcycling of manufacturing byproducts.

Jun Asaki, Chief Sustainability Officer of Suntory Holdings, comments, “Advancing from demonstration to early commercialization is a meaningful milestone for our partnership with TOWING. We believe high-performance biochar can help reduce chemical fertilizer use, support GHG emissions reductions, improve yields, and advance circularity through upcycling, and we will continue to move these efforts forward.”

Kohei Nishida, the founder and CEO of TOWING, comments, “Our goal has been to bring Japanese academic innovation into practical agriculture and scaling that innovation required strong partners. With Suntory’s support from the very beginning—through close collaboration and connections with key partners—we have achieved the successful commercial launch of this high-performance biochar. Together, we aim to accelerate its adoption in Japan and globally, supporting next-generation agriculture that reduces chemical fertilizer use, advances carbon neutrality, and ensures stable crop yields which helps address global food challenges and build a more sustainable future.”

\*1 A soil amendment created by adding soil-based microorganisms into carbonized unused biomass (biochar) developed by TOWING, which have functions such as accelerating the decomposition of organic fertilizers.

\*2 Tea plant is an evergreen shrub in the Camellia genus, cultivated for green and black tea production.

\*3 Regenerative agriculture is a sustainable, outcomes-driven approach focused on restoring soil health, biodiversity, and improving farmer livelihoods by reducing the use of synthetic inputs.

\*4 Cover crops enhance soil quality by adding organic matter into the soil and preventing erosion.

## **About Suntory Group**

As a global leader in the beverage industry, Suntory Group aims to inspire the brilliance of life, by creating rich experiences for people, in harmony with nature. Sustained by the gifts of nature and water, the Group offers a uniquely diverse portfolio of products across more than 80 countries, from award-winning Japanese whiskies Yamazaki and Hibiki, iconic American whiskies Jim Beam and Maker's Mark, canned ready-to-drink -196 (minus one-nine-six), The Premium Malt's beer, Japanese wine Tomi, and the world-famous Château Lagrange. Its brand collection also includes non-alcoholic favorites Orangina, Lucozade, Oasis, BOSS coffee, Suntory Tennensui water, TEA+ Oolong Tea, and V energy drink, as well as popular health and wellness product Sesamin EX.

Founded as a family-owned business in 1899 in Osaka, Japan, Suntory Group has grown into a global company operating throughout the Americas, Europe, Africa, Asia and Oceania, with approximately 40,000 employees worldwide drawn upon the unique blend of Japanese artisanship and global tastes to explore new product categories and markets.

For more information, visit [www.suntory.com](http://www.suntory.com) and [Drink Smart](#).

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## **About TOWING**

Founded in February 2020 at Nagoya University, TOWING is a green AgriTech startup working to build a “super-circular” society through next-generation sustainable agriculture. The company’s flagship product, Soratan, is a high-performance biochar developed by combining technologies from research institutions, the National Agricultural Research Organization, with the company’s proprietary innovations. Made from carbonized, locally sourced biomass and enhanced with functional microbes, it delivers various benefits when applied to agricultural land, such as increased yield, improved crop quality, and enhanced soil carbon sequestration. In June 2023, a project of Soratan was registered under Japan’s J-Credit Scheme for “Biochar Application to Farmland” and already issued carbon credit for three times up to date. TOWING is also a recipient of the Green Food System Act Foundation Project and was selected in the first round of the Ministry of Agriculture’s SBIR Phase 3 Innovation Fund.

TOWING Website: <https://towing.co.jp/en>