

A 'Torrefic' Energy Solution

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Torrefaction, a process commonly used to dry and roast coffee beans, has evolved into a promising bioenergy innovation. Traditional biomass and coal may soon be playing second string to torrefied feedstocks, if companies striving to commercialize torrefaction technologies are successful.

Torrefaction involves using extreme heat on biomass—most companies developing torrefaction technologies are currently centered on wood—in a low-oxygen environment, during which volatile organic compounds, water and hemicellulose are separated from the cellulose and lignin. These changed properties produce a fuel that is easier to transport and store and is carbon neutral.

Several companies say they will soon achieve commercialization. One of those companies is South Carolina-based Agri-Tech Producers LLC, which expects to have a torrefaction technology commercialized within the next year.

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