

Q: What are the carbon benefits of burning renewable fuels vs. coal?

A: Ultimate analyses of fuels typically result in carbon contents of the following.

	<u>Carbon Content</u>
Biomass	30-50%
Coal	60-70%

That equates to approximately 15-60% less carbon in biomass than in coal. Ultimately though, a real carbon comparison between fuels must be done as a ratio of carbon to btu content. Since coal can be 20-60% higher in heat content than biomass we therefore see a carbon to btu ratio which may be very equal, and sometimes actually in favor of coal.

The benefit of burning renewable fuels comes from the nature of the carbon cycle on our planet. The carbon originating from the life, decay and combustion of animal and plant material is one which has not varied considerably for thousands of years. As long as the combustion of biomass is replaced with living biomass the cycle remains effectively neutral.

The combustion of coal enters carbon into this cycle, carbon which has been trapped deep within in the Earth for tens of millions of years. This effectively adds carbon to the Earths carbon cycle faster than it can be absorbed by our oceans, plant life and sediments.

