

ReUseWaste organic fertiliser survey - update

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If treated safely, organic waste contains nutrients, and so can be used as an agricultural fertiliser. A number of different technologies, both traditional and novel, are available to treat organic waste and convert it into a useful product for farmers. These technologies include composting, anaerobic digestion (in biogas plants), drying at a high temperature, deriving mineral concentrates from the material, and several others. However, although the technologies are generally well-developed, the opinions of farmers regarding them are little understood.

We are surveying farmers in five EU countries (Spain, Portugal, Italy, Denmark, and the Netherlands). The survey is based on a questionnaire that asks farmers about the types of organic fertilisers they use now or plan to use in the near future, their opinions of the most desirable properties of treated organic fertilisers, and the barriers to increasing their use.

The survey was created using Survey Monkey and is made up of 24 questions that can be filled out either online, or on paper. The survey was translated into Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, and Danish prior to use in the relevant countries. The English version of which can be found here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/reusewasteproducts>

Data collection is being conducted by a variety of methods: via the internet, through face-to-face interviews at conferences and industry events, and through contacts from farmer associations and governmental organisations. Since September 2014, the data collection phase has been ongoing; however, we have not yet collected enough responses to draw conclusions from the data.

In the Netherlands, the survey was advertised in a newsletter by farmer's association LTO Noord. Because of the difficulty in attracting an adequate number of responses, the survey will be re-advertised in the near future. In Portugal, the survey was conducted at a pig farmer's fair in September 2014 (22nd national pig fair, Montijo, Portugal). The surveys completed at this fair are being supplemented with contacts from farmer associations and governmental organisations.

In Spain, the survey was conducted with farmers who attended the SEPOR pig fair in Murcia (September 2014), and the survey work will continue with direct visits to farmers. In Italy, the survey was conducted with farmers at the Cremona dairy cattle fair (October 2014), and the EIMA agricultural machinery fair (November 2014). The surveys from these events have been followed up by direct contact with farmers through existing contacts in the country. In Denmark, data collection will begin soon at the 2015 PlanteKongress (January) and will continue through contacts within the government agricultural service.

In the coming months, we hope to conclude the data collection phase, analyse the responses and present the results both at the Ramiran conference in Germany and also in a scientific article shortly afterwards.

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	1 - most important	2 - second most important	3 - third most important
Forbidden to use organic fertilisers when most needed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organic fertilisers are not easily available	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
More difficult to plan for organic fertiliser use than for mineral fertiliser	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of subsidy from Government	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organic fertilisers do not have official quality certification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
High cost to buy/produce	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organic fertilisers increase the risk of environmental pollution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Machinery to produce/handle organic fertilisers is expensive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Uncertainty in nitrogen, phosphorous or potassium content	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Significant odour nuisance for neighbors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficult to get permits to use organic fertilisers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of expert advice to help with organic fertiliser use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficult to handle and/or spread organic fertilisers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nitrogen, phosphorous or potassium content not suitable for crops	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Figure 1. An example question page from the online survey