

23. Would Farmers in Brandenburg Accept Urine as Fertiliser?

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Farmers and farm managers in Brandenburg were asked for their willingness to use urine as fertiliser collected in separation toilets. This would be a vital preposition for the successful implementation of a no-mix sanitation system.

After identifying the potential influences to farmers opinions regarding urine as fertiliser, 6 expert-interviews have been arranged. As a result a number of hypotheses were set up including the following topics: Price and fertilising value, legal consequences, smell, ecological safety, saleability of products, type of crop preferred for application, technical prepositions.

A questionnaire was developed to verify the hypotheses. The paper was send to 400 participants located around Berlin. 68 farmers or farm managers replied via fax or post.

The participants answered as follows:

25 % would apply urine on their fields, 53 % was not sure and 22 % would not do so
63 % would expect problems to sale their products if vegetables would be fertilised with urine
79 % would agree to use urine for energy and forage production only
71 % would apply urine if they would not carry legal responsibility only
62 % did not feel ecological provisions

In conclusion, only 18 % of the participants would generally not apply urine on their fields. The major part has not come to a final decision yet. A clear legal status with no unforeseeable risks at the farmers' side is a preposition for a successful implementation of the system. Farmers would mainly use urine at non-food crops. A high awareness of problems related with pharmaceutical residues was observed, hygiene was not considered to become a problem.

The study shows a general willingness of farmers to use urine on their fields but also that fundamental questions have still to be answered.

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