

# THE ROLE OF PEERS' SUGGESTIONS AND USERS' CHARACTERISTICS IN AFFECTING THE ADOPTION OF COMPOST

Giorgia Bagagiolo <sup>(1)</sup>, Lucia Vigororso <sup>(1)</sup>, Niccolò Pampuro <sup>(1)</sup>, Eugenio Cavallo <sup>(1)</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Institute for Agricultural and Earth Moving Machines (IMAMOTER) - National Research Council of Italy (CNR),

Strada delle Cacce, 73 - 10135 Torino, ITALY. Contacts: g.bagagiolo@ima.to.cnr.it

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Although composting municipal organic waste (MOW) is known to be a valid alternative to landfill use reducing the disposal problem and despite the number of proved advantages deriving from compost use (improvement of nutrition levels of the soil, decreasing requirements for synthetic chemical fertilizer), previous research indicate that this kind of compost is still applied to limited extent by potential users. A lack or not sufficient knowledge about this product might hinder its adoption, also because users' decision-making process could be influenced by a number of individual's personal characteristics or by external factors such as peers' suggestions.

**This study aimed to identify possible determinants of compost adoption among potential professional and non-professional users.**



## 2. MATERIALS & METHODS

### SAMPLE of 59 participants who do not use compost

(recruited among visitors of the 24<sup>th</sup> Ecomondo Green Technology Expo)

34 professional farmers

25 non-professional users (hobbists)



### QUESTIONNAIRE

#### Investigated variables

- Level of interest in adopting compost (4 point rating scale – 1 = strongly disagree/2 = disagree/3 = agree/4 = strongly agree)
- Perceived compost properties (it completely replaces other fertilizers/ it partially replaces other fertilizers/it does not replace other fertilizers at all)

#### Determinants affecting compost adoption

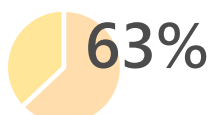
Having received peers' suggestions about compost (yes/no)

#### Socio-demo characteristics

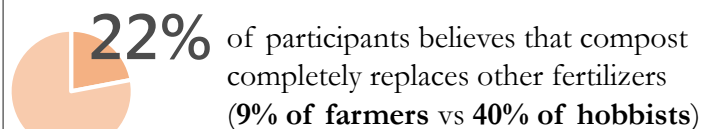
Gender, age, level of education, professional sector



## 3. RESULTS



of participants are interested in using compost (50% of farmers vs 80 % of hobbists)



### PEERS' SUGGESTIONS:

- Have significant positive effect on users' interest in adopting compost ( $p=.021$ ).
- Have NO significant effect on respondent's believes about compost fertilizing effect ( $p=.132$ ).

### SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES:

- age and education did not affect the results;
- professional farmer has a negative effect for both "level of interest in adopting compost" and "perceived fertilizing value of compost".

## 4. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The obtained results are consistent with literature research reporting how **farmers are still quite reluctant in replacing chemical fertilizers with compost from MOW**. Indeed, as confirmed by other studies, one of the most important barriers to the use of this type of compost in agricultural sector is uncertainty in nutrient content and difficulty in planning its use. Nevertheless, farmers' reluctance to adopt compost made from MOW could be overcome with mechanism of promotion aimed at **disseminating qualities and properties** of this products. In this process of promotion the **peer-advising networking** could represent the key mechanism for new direct forms of interaction among farmers, hobbists, traders, composters and retailers.