



Implementation of research results to prevent land degradation in viticultural areas

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This study shows the lack of interest of land users to establish contact with scientific institutions and their reluctance to change their traditional way to manage their soils.

It is conducted in Madrid and Castilla La Mancha, Spain, where the production of wine is an important source of income. The basic research was dealing with sustainable land management in sloping vineyards to prevent soil degradation. The usual reduced tillage practice in the area is compared with different cover grasses in the inter-rows of vines. The results demonstrate that these managements are able to increase soil organic matter, improve infiltration, reduce runoff and soil loss and increase soil aggregate stability. Nevertheless a decrease in production is noticed in some permanent cover treatments.

A survey to know the feasibility of implementation of this sustainable land management was conducted. Less than 5% of vine growers coming to cellars and cooperatives were willing to be interviewed. Finally 64 vine growers answered a questionnaire regarding different aspects of their environmental concerns, age, land management practices and economic situation.

The majority of respondents (82%) are worried about erosion problems in their sloping vineyards. They were informed about the results of the abovementioned project but only 32% of them would change the cultivation by grasses in the inter-rows. The respondents were not old (72% below 50 years old), and the agriculture was not their first activity (69% had other different sources of income).

It is remarkable that they have some misunderstandings and lack of knowledge in questions regarding soil conservation.

Only 3% of them receive some kind of economic aid from the institutions to avoid land degradation. This could be related to the small or medium size of their lands as 87% of them have plots smaller than 50 ha.

The extension services and policy makers have to face this situation to achieve the proper implementation of scientific results.

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