



Limitations and barriers for adopting sustainable management practices in different farm types across Europe

Gema Guzmán (1), Ángela Portero (1), Tom Vanwalleghem (1), Ana Pedrera (2), Antonio Jesús Gaitán (2), and Hein Ten Berge (3)

(1) Universidad de Córdoba, Agronomía, Córdoba, Spain (g92gudim@uco.es), (2) IFAPA- Alameda del Obispo, Junta de Andalucía, Córdoba, Spain, (3) Plant Research International Wageningen University and Research Centre, Wageningen, The Netherlands

Although apparently the conservation of natural resources such as water and soil does not represent important concerns for our society, the evolution of the world population and the degradation of these resources pose a challenge to improving agricultural food production capacity and conserving, and in some cases restoring, the environmental quality. Unfortunately, the history contains numerous examples of abandonment of these resources (McNeill 1992, Montgomery 2007). Although most of the agronomic conservation practices have been known for millennia, their implementation has often been hindered by non-agricultural motives (Davis et al. 2012).

The European project CATCH-C (ten Berge 2011) started last year with the aim of evaluating sustainable soil management practices and exploring the difficulties for their adoption, both at farm and institutional level, to overcome them in the near future.

As a first step with that purpose, a selection of best management practices (BMPs) based on interviews with advisors and scientific knowledge were proposed for each of the considered farm typologies: arable crops, permanent crops and pasture. These farm types are representative of the Mediterranean area in terms of agroecological properties, extension, economical importance and soil degradation problems. Semi-structured interviews were carried out by addressing different profiles of farmers to identify in a qualitative way the main limitations for adopting these BMPs on their farms. Different questionnaires were prepared based on the farmers' responses and launched at a larger scale, with the aim of achieving approximately 100 responses per each farm typology. Finally, responses from the questionnaires will be analyzed to explore the causes that hinder or impede the adoption of BMPs in different farm typologies.

References:

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