

# SINGLE-IMPACT FICHE

## MANURE PROCESSING TECHNIQUES



### IMPACT: SOIL BIOLOGICAL QUALITY

Data extracted in July 2021

**Note to the reader:** This fiche summarises the impact of manure processing techniques on SOIL BIOLOGICAL QUALITY. It is based on 1 peer-reviewed synthesis research paper<sup>1</sup>, including 92 individual studies.

#### 1. WEIGHT OF THE EVIDENCE

- CONSISTENCY OF THE IMPACT:

When compared to absence of manure treatment, manure processing techniques (namely composting or anaerobic digestion) have a positive effect on soil biological quality according to the reviewed synthesis paper (see **Table 1**). The number of synthesis papers reporting positive, negative or no effect is based on the statistical comparison of the intervention and the control. The number of synthesis papers reporting relevant results, but without statistical test of the effects is labelled as “uncertain”.

In particular, soil fertilisation with composted or digested manure, as compared to raw manure, showed a positive effect on different metrics, such as soil microbial carbon and soil enzymatic activity.

The reviewed synthesis paper include data collected in Europe (see **Table 2**).

**Table 1.** Summary of effects. The effect with the higher score is marked in bold and the cell coloured. The numbers between parenthesis indicate the number of synthesis papers with a quality score of at least 50%. Details on quality criteria can be found in the next section.

Impact	Intervention (Technique)	Positive	Negative	No effect	Uncertain*
Increase soil biological quality	Composting/Anaerobic digestion	<b>1 (1)</b>	0	0	0

\* Number of synthesis papers that report relevant results but without statistical test comparison of the intervention and the control.

- QUALITY OF THE SYNTHESIS PAPERS: *The quality score summarises 16 criteria assessing the quality of three main aspects of the synthesis papers: 1) the literature search strategy and studies selection; 2) the statistical analysis; 3) the potential bias. Details on quality criteria can be found in this document [→](#).*

As shown in the “Quality score” in **Table 2**, the quality level of the synthesis paper was of 69%. The following quality criteria were not satisfied: “Number of studies at each step”, “Individual effect sizes”, “Dataset available” and “Publication bias analysed”.

#### 2. IMPACTS

The main characteristics and results of the synthesis papers are summarized in **Table 2**. Detailed results of each synthesis study are reported in the summary reports

**Table 2.** Main characteristics of the synthesis papers reporting impacts of manure processing techniques on soil biological quality. The references are ordered chronologically with the most recent publication date first.

---

<sup>1</sup> Research synthesis papers include a formal meta-analysis or systematic reviews with some quantitative results

Reference	Population	Scale	Num. papers	Intervention (technique)	Comparator	Metric	Conclusion	Quality score
Liu, SB; Wang, JY; Pu, SY; Blagodatskaya, E; Kuzyakov, Y; Razavi, BS 2020	Arable land	Global	92	Fertilisation using composted/digested manure (Mixed, Cattle, Pig, Poultry)	Fertilisation using untreated manure (Mixed, Cattle, Pig, Poultry)	Soil microbial carbon; Soil enzymatic activity	The addition of composted/digested manure had a significantly greater effect on soil microbial carbon and on most biochemical properties than non-composted manure.	69%

### 3. KNOWLEDGE GAPS

No knowledge gap was reported.

### 4. SYSTEMATIC REVIEW SEARCH STRATEGY

<b>Keywords</b>	<p>TOPIC: (manure OR slurry OR digestate OR (digested near/3 manure)) AND TOPIC: (management OR storage OR lagoon* OR "anaerobic digest*" OR tank* OR treatment OR process* OR technolog* OR techni* OR (soil near/3 application) OR (soil near/3 distribution) OR (soil near/3 amend*) OR biogas OR precision) AND TOPIC: ("meta-analy*" OR "systematic* review*" OR "evidence map" OR "global synthesis" OR "evidence synthesis" OR "research synthesis")</p> <p>or</p> <p>TITLE-ABS-KEY: (manure OR slurry OR digestate OR (digested W/3 manure)) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY: (management OR storage OR lagoon* OR "anaerobic digest*" OR tank* OR treatment OR process* OR technolog* OR techni* OR (soil W/3 application) OR (soil W/3 distribution) OR (soil W/3 amend*) OR biogas OR precision) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY: ("meta-analy*" OR "systematic* review*" OR "evidence map" OR "global synthesis" OR "evidence synthesis" OR "research synthesis")</p>
<b>Search dates</b>	No time restrictions
<b>Databases</b>	Web of Science and Scopus, run in July 2021
<b>Selection criteria</b>	<p>The main criteria that led to the exclusion of a synthesis paper were if the paper: (1) was out of the scope; (2) did not deal with manure processing techniques or dealt with other stages of manure management (e.g. storage, land application, animal housing techniques); (3) reported studies with absolute values of emission factors, without comparing processing techniques with a reference management scenario; (4) did not clearly state the intervention and comparator; (5) was not either a systematic review or a meta-analysis; (6) was not written in English. Synthesis papers that passed the relevance criteria were subject to critical appraisal carried out on paper-by-paper basis.</p> <p>The search returned 269 synthesis papers potentially relevant for the practice object of our fiche. Searches for other farming practices added another 8 potentially relevant synthesis papers. From the 277 potentially relevant synthesis papers, 207 were excluded after reading the title and abstract,</p>

	and 53 after reading the full text according to the above-mentioned criteria. Finally, 17 synthesis papers were selected for manure processing techniques, from which 1 was relevant for this impact.
--	---