

SoildiverAgro project

Adoption of new management practices to increase crop production and quality



THE WHAT AND WHY

Stakeholders' views on the agricultural practices applied in potato crop in the Continental area: obstacles and effective proposals

Identifying the most relevant current agri-environmental problems of potato crop and the priority needs of end-users are necessary to assess the practical potential for integrating more sustainable farming practices into the different farming systems. In a corresponding survey in the Continental region, 18 people participated: potato farmers, agricultural technical advisors and other stakeholders such as researchers or administrators with an average age of 48 years. The most serious problems identified were rainfall scarcity during the growing period and therefore, low and variable yields as well as high incidences of pests, diseases and weeds. The measures ranked most important include increasing soil fertility and mobilizing nutrients during crop development, increasing the organic matter content, improving soil structure as well as reducing the incidence of pests, diseases and weeds. Among the different tillage systems minimum and conventional tillage were considered effective practices although there were concerns about high costs and

the need of adequate new machinery. To improve fertilization and soil conservation, the use of green manure and the addition of solid organic matter or the incorporation of crop residues as well as maintaining vegetation cover and crop diversification are proposed. This last-mentioned measure is also considered effective for pest and disease control. Despite the fact that the stakeholders identify problems in the agricultural practices that are being implemented, they did not respond on some of the techniques to be applied. According to their point of view, there are reasons such as lack of information, cost-effectiveness or lack of regulations to encourage the application of these techniques. The fact that the advisors work for distributors of agricultural inputs is also seen as a barrier. Therefore, there is a need to research, advise and keep farmers informed in order to steer agriculture towards profitable and sustainable production systems.



1. Cultivation of potato plants in the Continental region

KEYWORDS

Survey, potato cultivation, Continental region, sustainable production

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