

AB115

Consumer's knowledge, attitudes and willingness to pay(WTP) for co-compost produced by Municipal Solid Waste(MSW)

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Improper MSW management and over use of agro-chemicals have become burning issues in Sri Lanka. Most of the Sri Lankan Local Authorities (LAs) have continuously disposed their wastes without adequate segregation or treatment to open bare lands or environmentally sensitive areas like river banks and marshy lands. Co-composting can be the most suitable method of MSW management in mainly agricultural areas in Sri Lanka. However, composting from MSW was not succeed due to low quality and poor marketing strategies. Therefore, this study measured potential market price for co-compost and analysed attitude of compost use by bio-degradable wastes of MSW.

Pretested structured questionnaires were used to collect data from 60 compost users selected using simple random sampling method from five Grama Niladari Divisions in Haputhale Divisional Secretary Divisions in Nuwaraeliya District in Sri Lanka. Contingent valuation method was used to estimate WTP of compost users by offering bids for unit price of co-composted fertilizer.

The study revealed that 55% of compost users accepted bid value 10 SLRs per one kilogram of co-composted fertilizer. Age, education level, monthly total income, knowledge level about compost and experience of compost usage were the basic factors effecting for the WTP. A total of 72% of them had positive attitudes on agricultural and, environmental benefits with the relevant quality parameters of compost. There were 77% of respondents who stated their preference to buy co-composted fertilizer produced by using MSW. Co-composting of bio-degradable waste of MSW can be recommended as a sustainable and economical solution for MSW management. Co-composting can be a unique solution for the agricultural areas. However, potential technologically advanced co-composting methods such as environmental recycle system is recommended to be materialised as the findings of this study.

Key words: *Municipal Solid Waste, co-composting, Willingness to pay*

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