

Development of rapid methods for estimating the fertilizing ability (nitrogen and potassium) of pig slurry and its changes during storage

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Two rapid methods for ammonium-nitrogen testing and one for potassium were applied to forty pig slurry samples. The results were compared with those obtained by chemical assessing after direct distillation in the case of NH₄ and by a flame photometric method for K. Among the tested methods the best one was « Agros » for NH₄⁺, used together with the already preconized gravimetric method and immediately applicable in practice. Selective electrodes (gas sensing electrodes for NH₄ and ion selective electrodes for K⁺) could be used *in situ*, but their utilisation was more difficult.

The main elements of the slurry were also analysed during storage in six farm tanks. Results show that the dry matter content varied much. In contrast, the level of soluble nutrients (NH₄ and K⁺) was stable.

The results obtained should lead to a better use of pig slurry in agriculture.

Swine waste anaerobic digesters : technical and economic performance

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More than 120 animal waste anaerobic digesters exist in France. They were built between 1979 and 1983 either without financial aid or with a state grant.

In this study, 76 digesters were systematically studied. The volume of biogas produced, the biogas required for the maintenance of fermentation (self-consumption) and the gas used in replacement of a conventional power supply were recorded. Moreover, the waste used and the amount of methane produced were systematically analysed (total DM, organic matter, N Kj. - N_{NH₃} - total and soluble COD) once a month.

Results reported here concern 9 swine waste anaerobic digesters. Eight units were based on a mesophilic continuous system, one on a contact process. Two of them were built privately, the other by an engineer.

Analyses of manure did not show a significant difference except in 2 places treating special kinds of pig manure : very old manure settled in pit and manure from pigs fed on soup and emptied in very short pipelines without dilution risk. The composition of the treated swine waste was the following : T.D.M. = 51.3 g/l, Org. M = 35.7 g/l, N kj = 3.9 g/l, COD = 49.7 g/l.

The digester output expressed as m³ biogas/m³ tank/day ranged from 0.4 to 1.3 m³/m³. d over a period of 9 to 11 months. Output close to 1.0 was accompanied by a production of organic matter of 0.5 m³/kg as compared to the organic matter introduced, which is an usual performance. Low outputs can be explained either by a high detention time (depending on the tank size) or by a low productivity of the matter which can be checked