

## PLANT NUTRIENTS IN ANIMAL WASTES IN SRI LANKA

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A considerable awareness exists on the need to use organic manures in crop production. Animal wastes are a good source of carbon and plant nutrients, but unlike chemical fertilizers, their nutrient composition varies considerably. However, it is important to obtain information on the nutrient content of animal wastes for the proper utilization of these materials as fertilizer.

For this purpose fresh samples of dung of cattle, buffalo, sheep, goat, pig and poultry were collected from the central, southern, and western regions of Sri Lanka. Samples were oven dried at 69°C and analysed for total nitrogen, phosphate ( $P_2O_5$ ), and potash ( $K_2O$ ) content.

Nitrogen content in the wastes ranged from 1.50% in buffalo dung to 2.64% in that of poultry. Dung of poultry, goat, sheep and pig had higher nitrogen content than cattle and buffalo dung. The phosphate content ranged from 1.49% in buffalo to 3.25% in poultry dung. Poultry, pig, goat and sheep dung had higher phosphate content than cattle and buffalo dung. The potash content of poultry dung was appreciably higher than in other materials.

Calculations based on Sri Lankan livestock population figures indicate that the nutrients contained in animal wastes comprise as much as 41, 49 and 33, percent respectively, of the quantity of nitrogen, phosphate and potash imported as chemical fertilizers in 1985.

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