



## **Joint position of the ManuREsource conference**

**27-28 November 2017, Eindhoven, NL**

*Towards a Circular Economy: removing obstacles for nutrient recycling whilst ensuring economic viability and environmental protection*

### **Context**

The central theme of the 3rd edition of ManuREsource is the transition in manure management. Manure management is moving rapidly away from a problem-solving situation towards an opportunities-driven approach. There are plenty of possibilities to create value from manure which can turn a manure surplus in one region into an opportunity in another region. Manure valorisation can therefore be a frontrunner of the circular economy.

In the sector of manure processing, the transition towards a circular economy, could ensure:

- the production of alternatives for chemical fertilisers;
- the reduction of the import of limited resources of nutrients such as phosphate rock,
- the production of other materials (proteins, fibers, ...) from manure;
- the valorization of organic carbon on a local level.

This transition can be performed by adapting existing technologies or by developing new circular techniques. It is important to compare the environmental and systemic impact of all these techniques: both conventional, adapted and new techniques.

With the upcoming New Legislative Framework<sup>1</sup>, we are on a tipping point to realise a more sustainable manure processing, although realistic economic, environmental and social preconditions need to be ensured.

<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/goods/new-legislative-framework\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/goods/new-legislative-framework_en)



### **Key message**

It is necessary that innovation is stimulated, by creating room to experiment, and by eliminating legislative obstacles to create viable business cases. A long term policy vision is crucial to make this transition happen.

Nutrient recovery techniques already implemented in practice still struggle with the economic viability of the technology. This is strongly related to the marketing of the recovered mineral components. This in turn is related to the application limits of the products – today nutrients derived from manure are subjected to lower limits than similar mineral fertilisers produced from virgin materials. Hence the question for an ‘end-of-manure’ status arises, this to enable the use and valorisation of recovered fertiliser products.

Therefore we advocate for harmonised EU regulations on the trade and utilisation of recovered fertilising products.

Next to valorization of N, P and other nutrients/materials from manure, it is important to acknowledge the value of organic carbon - by applying carbon rich fertilisers, a practical solution can be provided to the challenges of climate change. Carbon sequestration in soil has a tremendous effect both on agricultural productivity and on global greenhouse gas cycle. Agricultural policy can be a key driver in combatting climate change – this by valorisation of organic carbon through sustainable fertilisation.

### **Way forward**

By removing legal obstructions and a continued commitment to invest in research and practical implementation, Europe can become a front runner in the implementation of circular economy solutions for recovery of nutrients from manure which will close the nutrient cycle of agriculture.

The following organizations/persons jointly underline the importance of addressing these points in order to facilitate innovation and development of a nutrient circular economy for manure, whilst ensuring environmental protection.

<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/goods/new-legislative-framework\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/goods/new-legislative-framework_en)