Regular applications of organic substances

Goal	Increase the edaphic fauna and microbial functional diversity
Short description of the measure	Organic fertilizers are all kind of substances such as manures, compost and other organic waste that are usually recycled from other farm or processing activities. Organic manures contain N-rich materials which are slow releasing under the action of soil microorganisms and which can significantly raise soil fertility in the medium and long term.  **Pic. 1: Extensive livestock in an agro-forestry system, this measure increases the quality of soil properties, both biological and chemical-physical.**
Timeframe (When to start a measure and anticipated time for implementation)	Permanent Action: the application of organic matter is desirable every year taking into account the recommendations included in the next paragraph.
How auditors can assess if the measure has been implemented in a good quality?	The pollution potential of organic fertilizer is similar to any nutrient containing fertilizer and must be controlled through proper management techniques, such as restrained application rates and times. The application of organic matter must be done: ▪ during dry weather to avoid leaching, ▪ 10 meter distant to any water source (pond, stream, river, etc.). ▪ Organic matter must be treated or compost to be incorporated to the soil.
Additional information the auditor need for verification (if any)	Farm Register Book

Effects on biodiversity (ecosystems, species, soil biodiversity)	 Edaphic fauna and microbiodiversity: Increasing soil organic matter levels leads to less compaction and salinization; soil faunal activity increases leading to structural improvement in the soil. This will ultimately avoid economic losses and related social consequences (Nawaz, 2013).
Indicator/key data	▪ Units per hectare/ tonne of N from organic fertilizer. ▪ % of organic fertilizer / Total fertilizers application. ▪ Frequency of organic applications.
Reference	▪ The impact of agricultural practices on biodiversity Alison McLaughlin a, Pierre Mineau b,* 'Sagittaria Ecological Services, /-/43 Rue Laurier, Hull, Que. JBX 3W4, Canada"National Wildlife Research Centre, Canadian Wildli-fe Service, JOO Blvd. Gamelin, Hull, Que. KIA 0H3, Canad ELSEVIER Agri-culture. Ecosystems and Environment 55 (1995) 201-212 ▪ The importance of soil organic matter. Key to drought-resistant soil and sus-tained food production (2005) FAO

Further information: Knowledge Pool

This Action Fact Sheet belongs to the training package for auditors of standard organisations and companies and was developed within the project LIFE Food & Biodiversity (Biodiversity in Standards and Labels of for the Food Industry). The main objective of the project is to improve the biodiversity performance of standards and sourcing requirements in the food industry by helping standard organisations to integrate efficient biodiversity criteria into their schemes and motivating food processing companies and retailers to include comprehensive biodiversity criteria into their sourcing guidelines.

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