

Farmers' perceptions on the apple orchard silvopasture in Galicia (NW Spain)

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Introduction

In Europe, the adoption of agroforestry practices by farmers is limited. Therefore, it is important to understand how farmers perceive agroforestry practices to promote their adoption (Rois-Díaz *et al.*, 2017). The aim of this study was to understand the knowledge that farmers have on apple orchard silvopasture in Galicia (NW Spain) through an analysis of farmer qualitative interviews.

Materials and methods

Qualitative interviews were conducted with farmers in Galicia. Farmers were randomly selected after stratification into two groups: farmers implementing conventional agriculture and farmers implementing apple orchard silvopasture. There were two types of questions in the interviews: 'simple' or closed format questions, and 'complex' or open format questions. More information on the interviews can be found in Rois-Díaz *et al.* (2017).

Results and discussion

The most common definition identified by farmers, for both agroforestry and non-agroforestry farmers, was that silvopasture is a combination of trees and animals. Most of the farmers did not establish silvopastoral practices on their apple orchards mainly due to a lack of technical knowledge or due to time constraints as a consequence of part-time employment. Taking into account these results, it would be beneficial to establish and/or reinforce networks among farmers in order to facilitate the flow of information because the most innovative farmers can experiment themselves with agroforestry practices.

Conclusion

In Galicia, farmers do not establish silvopastoral practices mainly due to a lack of technical knowledge, in spite of recognising the benefits of silvopasture in their orchards. It is necessary to increase the agroforestry knowledge among the farmers through the information activities and the establishment of innovation networks.

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