

## **Promoting Vermicomposting in the Philippines: Its impact on agriculture and the environment**

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### **Astract**

*The adverse impact of chemical agriculture in the Philippines on the soil and water environment and human health (of consumers and farm families alike) exacerbates rural poverty, even as agricultural productivity remains low.*

*Poor families, especially women, are the most affected by the health and environmental risks that are brought on by chemical agriculture, and they are hardest hit by the deteriorating productivity.*

*On the other hand, the solid waste management problem in the Philippines is increasingly being felt in rural and urban areas. Recycling (including composting) is practiced by only 6-13% (1997-2000) of the urban population (World Bank, 2004), considering that biodegradable or compostable waste account for 50-60% of household and municipal waste by volume (USAID 2005; World Bank, 2004; ADB 2004). Burning of agriculture waste is still a common practice, and is a principal source of air pollution in the countryside (Yevich and Logan, 2002).*

*In this study, the author proposes the practice of vermicomposting as technology for both sustainable agriculture and solid waste management, using the Buro-buro Springs Vermifarm vermicomposting experiences. Buro-buro Springs Vermifarm covers a three hectare farm in Negros Occidental that has trained over 2,000 individuals in Vermicomposting methods since 1997.*

#### *Findings Include:*

- *Vermicomposting is 100% effective in managing biodegradable waste with 1000kg of compostable waste yielding 500kg of vermicompost in 45 days.*
- *The products of vermicomposting (vermicast and vermicompost) are considered premium soil supplements, which when sold in the market can significantly contribute to household or farm income.*

*The study demonstrates that vermicomposting is an effective and viable technology in ecological solid waste management and organic agriculture. In the process, consumer health and farm productivity can be enhanced, while supporting ecological balance.*