Novel Strategies to Farm Waste Management, Converting Waste into Assets: An Overview

Dr. Ankita Nayak[1] , Dr. Sonam Subhadarshini[2], Mr. Dillip Kumar Mishra[3] Mr. Bikash Jethy[4]

1. Assistant Professor, Department of Business Administration, Trident Academy of Technology.
2. Assistant Professor, Department of Business Administration, Trident Academy of Technology.
3. Senior Project Manager, BIPROS.
4. Assistant Professor, Department of Business Administration, Trident Academy of Technology.

Abstract

In light of the inefficiencies and environmental damage associated with traditional disposal methods, the effective management of agricultural waste is an urgent global concern. A discernible trend in recent times has been the advancement of inventive methods for repurposing agricultural waste, hence endorsing circularity and sustainability within agricultural systems. Modern techniques for managing agricultural waste are outlined in this synopsis, emphasizing leveraging technology and innovative thinking to transform waste into useful resources. With a focus on creating biogas or biofuels to lower greenhouse gas emissions and lessen dependency on fossil fuels, it examines the possibilities of biomass as an energy source from organic waste and crop residues. Composting is thought to be a technique for converting organic waste into compost that is rich in nutrients, enhancing soil quality and increasing agricultural production. In addition, the idea of valorization—the repurposing of agricultural waste to produce biobased goods or improve soil health—is explored. This practice encourages waste reduction and the circular economy in agriculture. The study also examines precision agriculture techniques, which maximize resource use, reduce input costs, and increase yields by leveraging cutting-edge technologies like sensors, drones, and data analytics. Furthermore, the need of conserving perishable food using solar-powered micro cold storage units is emphasized in order to minimize food waste, and recyclable damaged vegetables are acknowledged as significant resources. Farmers may efficiently limit waste creation, enhance resource efficiency, and lessen the environmental impact of agricultural operations by merging sophisticated input management strategies with precision agriculture technology.

Keywords: Agricultural waste management, waste-to-resource conversion, biomass utilization, composting, precision agriculture

Introduction

The exponential rise in trash output in the modern era is a result of fast population growth, industrialization, and urbanization. Because of their detrimental effects on the environment and the economy, traditional waste management systems, which mostly concentrated on collection and disposal, are no longer practical. The conventional location for waste, landfills, is overflowing, and the procedures involved in incinerating waste add to air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. These approaches ignore the potential resources contained in waste materials in addition to failing to solve the expanding trash challenge. As a result, there is a greater need than ever for creative waste management strategies.A paradigm shift in waste management has occurred with the introduction of the idea of turning trash into assets. This method sees trash as a beneficial resource rather than an unavoidable burden. To recover and recycle resources from waste streams, cutting-edge technology, the circular economy, and sustainable practices are applied(Koul et al.,2022).

The circular economy aims to reduce environmental impact by turning waste into energy and useful products. It contrasts with the traditional linear economy, promoting durable, reusable, and recyclable items. Techniques like recycling, refurbishment, and remanufacturing conserve energy and resources. Technological advancements like IoT and AI improve waste management, reducing fuel usage and greenhouse gas emissions (Sharma et al.,2020). Biotechnology is transforming organic waste into high-quality compost and biogas through techniques like anaerobic digestion and composting. Waste-to-energy (WtE) technologies like pyrolysis and gasification provide sustainable energy and reduce landfill trash. Valorisation is a crucial step in turning waste into valuable resources, such as plastics and food and agricultural waste, promoting a circular economy in the agriculture industry(Duque-Acevedo et al.,2020).Global production of crop residues, animal dung, and agro-industrial byproducts results in a large volume of agricultural waste. This trash has historically been seen as an inconvenience and is frequently burned, allowed to decay in fields, or disposed of in ways that may be damaging to the environment. However, there has been a noticeable shift in the understanding of agricultural waste as a valuable resource that can be converted into advantageous assets as a result of technical improvements and an increasing emphasis on sustainability. This change could have a significant effect on agricultural output, economic growth, and environmental sustainability. The benefits that agricultural waste can have to the environment make it one of the main arguments for turning it into valuable resources(Koul et al.,2022). Conventional disposal techniques contribute to air pollution and climate change by releasing harmful pollutants. Agricultural waste can be transformed into useful goods, offering financial benefits and revenue streams for farmers and the agro-industry. This is especially important in poor countries with limited waste management infrastructure.

Bioenergy generation from agricultural waste can increase energy security and provide a sustainable alternative to fossil fuels(Donner et al.,2021).Agricultural waste can be transformed into valuable products like animal feed, organic fertilizers, and bioplastics, which can be sold at higher prices. This not only increases sustainability and efficiency but also improves soil fertility and quality by reducing water contamination and promoting plant nutrient uptake(Mujtaba et al., 2023).Turning agricultural waste into useful products can increase productivity and sustainability in agriculture. This process improves soil fertility and reduces pollution. It also benefits society by creating jobs in rural areas, promoting economic expansion, and reducing poverty. Training programs and educational projects empower farmers and communities to adopt sustainable waste management techniques. Governments and regulatory agencies should support waste-to-resource technologies through grants, tax breaks, and subsidies. Additionally, research and development in this field are crucial for innovation and improvement(Yaradoddi et al.,2020).Agricultural waste, including crop residues, animal waste, and crop leftovers, can be processed into soil amendments and biofuels. Secondary agricultural waste, agro-industrial waste, animal waste, and crop leftovers are the main categories. Crop residues, such as straw and leaves, are typically incinerated or used as animal feed. Animal waste, including manure and bedding materials, can be used as organic fertilizer or biogas. Agro-industrial waste, including oilseed pulp, fruit and vegetable peels, and spent grain, can be recycled into biofuels, compost, animal feed, and bioplastics(Awasthi et al.,2022).Secondary agricultural wastes, including packaging materials and outdated machinery, are crucial for resource depletion and environmental contamination. Inappropriate handling can lead to soil erosion, greenhouse gas emissions, and air and water contamination. However, these wastes can be transformed into useful resources like bioenergy, compost, and biochar.

Cutting-edge technologies can transform agricultural waste into biofuels, biogas, and bioelectricity; while composting and pyrolysis can enhance soil fertility and carbon sequestration(Ukanwa et al.,2019). Moreover, agricultural waste can be used to produce biobased goods like bioplastics, which offer environmentally friendly substitutes for polymers derived from petroleum.There are major financial gains from turning agricultural waste into useful assets. It lowers the cost of disposing of trash, encourages sustainable agricultural methods, and gives farmers and the agro-industry additional revenue streams. One way to decrease dependency on fossil fuels and improve energy security is through the development of biofuels from agricultural wastes. Using animal dung to produce organic fertilizers lessens the demand for chemical fertilizers, which lowers costs and has a smaller negative impact on the environment(Ramesh et al.,2021)The shift towards sustainable agriculture can enhance livelihoods, reduce migration, and create jobs in rural areas. This can be achieved through composting sites, bioenergy plants, and bioplastic manufacturing facilities. Empowering farmers and communities through education and training on sustainable waste management can foster environmental stewardship. Governments can incentivize this by providing grants, tax breaks, and subsidies(Capanoglu et al.,2022).Agricultural waste, generated through crop cultivation, animal husbandry, and agro-industrial activities, can contaminate the environment and lead to resource waste. However, it can be transformed into useful resources through sustainable practices and appropriate technologies. Wastes like straw, husks, stubble, and leaves are often burned, contributing to air pollution and climate change by releasing carbon dioxide, methane, and particulate matter(Alatzas et al.,2019).Livestock raises significant waste, including manure, bedding, and carcasses. Manure can be composted for organic fertilizers or digested for biogas. carcasses and by-products can be recycled into animal fat and bone meal. Unprocessed agricultural materials are converted into secondary products like molasses, spent grain, pulp, and fruit juice, which reduce waste and increase agricultural supply chain value. These secondary products have various uses, including biofuels, animal feed, compost, and bioplastics(Karić et al.,2022).

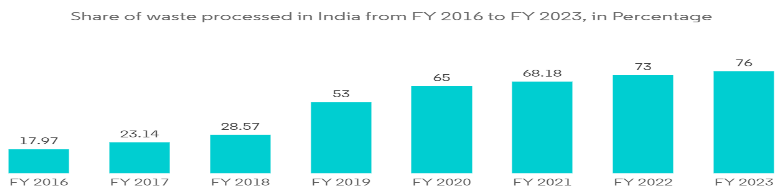

Fig 1, waste processed in India from FY 2016 to FY 2023

Objectives:

- To discover various strategies for managing farm waste, keeping a view to make waste into assets aiming at sustainability.
- To assess the economic conditions of implementing innovative farm waste management strategies, including cost-benefit analysis and potential revenue streams
- To encourage innovation and improve waste conversion technologies with management practices including cost-benefit analysis.
- To Comprehend Traditional waste management tools with modern management practices in different countries.

Purpose of the Study

This paper aims to give an overview of innovative farm waste management strategies that transform waste into valuable assets. The study seek to highlight traditional farm waste management with modern management, and different waste management practices adopted by different countries. By achieving these purposes, the study aims to contribute to the creation of a more sustainable, economically viable, and environmentally friendly agricultural sector, ultimately supporting the well-being of farmers and the broader community. This study also through lights on different new trends and techniques for handling farm waste materials.

Conventional Waste Management Techniques: Honouring the Past for a Sustainable Future

Traditional agricultural waste management strategies aim to maintain ecological balance, protect human and animal health, and ensure sustainable production systems. Composting, a natural process that creates nutrient-rich compost from organic waste, is crucial for soil quality enhancement, reducing artificial fertilizers, and combating climate change by keeping organic waste out of landfills(Koul et al.,2022). Composting and recycling are common waste management techniques in agriculture, reducing waste generation and environmental contamination. Recycling involves collecting and repurposing agricultural waste, such as plastic mulches and irrigation pipes. Proper disposal procedures are necessary for non-recyclable or hazardous waste, such as pesticide containers and chemicals, to prevent soil and water contamination (Esparza et al.,2020).Traditional agriculture waste management faces challenges like labour, transportation, and recycling infrastructure. Sustainable composting technologies and circular economy initiatives aim to maximize value, reduce production, and optimize resource usage(Ayilara et al.,2020).Traditional agricultural waste management techniques face financial, environmental, and technology limitations, leading to nutrient loss, soil degradation, and contamination of soil, water, and biodiversity(Latt et al.,2023).Traditional waste management methods may lack technological innovations for optimizing resource recovery and processing. Modern composting techniques like aerobic digestion and in-vessel composting offer shorter processing times and better odour control.

A Kenyan study compared in-vessel composting to conventional heap composting, highlighting its benefits(Thomson et al.,2022). Economic constraints in the agricultural sector can hinder the adoption of sustainable waste management techniques, particularly for smallholder farmers. High costs and limited market demand for compost products can hinder the economic feasibility of recycling operations, as seen in a case study in Sub-Saharan Africa(Amede et al.,2023).Traditional waste management practices, such as burning agricultural waste, are often rooted in societal norms and cultural traditions. To promote alternative methods and reduce environmental impact, community involvement and knowledge sharing are crucial. For instance, in Bangladesh's rural areas, cultural beliefs and lack of knowledge about recycling and composting continue to lead to uncontrolled dumping and open burning(Bhuvaneshwari et al.,2019). Smallholder farmers in Andhra Pradesh, India, are implementing integrated pest management (IPM) strategies to manage crop pests and reduce pesticide use. They use cultural, biological, and mechanical techniques, such as trapping, intercropping, and crop rotation, to control pest populations. This approach promotes biodiversity, ecosystem resilience, and reduces the need for pesticides and environmental pollutants(Singh et al.,2023). Saskatchewan grain farm implements a recycling scheme for agricultural plastics, using irrigation tubing, silage wrap, and grain sacks instead of disposal. The farm works with waste management firms and recycling centres to transport the gathered plastics, which are then processed into new products, reducing plastic pollution and diverting waste from landfills(Norouzi et al.,2022).A California organic farm has implemented a composting program to manage agricultural leftovers, combining crop waste with other organic materials like food waste and animal manure. This method not only reduces trash but also promotes sustainable agriculture practices and soil health, reducing waste(Kaushal et al.,2021).

Reinventing the Agricultural Sector: New Trends and Developments in the Handling of Farm Waste

Farm waste management is crucial for sustainable agriculture, as it can pose environmental, economic, and societal problems. Traditional methods often degrade soil and pollute the environment. Innovative techniques and technology, such as precision farming, waste valorisation, bioenergy production, and circular economy concepts, aim to convert agricultural waste into useful resources with minimal negative environmental effects. Farmers, agribusinesses, and legislators can effectively address these issues(Nguyen et al.,2022).Waste valorisation is an innovative technique for managing agricultural waste, transforming traditional leftovers like crop stalks, straw, and husks into bio-based materials, biofuels, and bioproducts. Biochemical processes like fermentation, pyrolysis, and gasification convert lignocellulosic biomass into biofuels like bioethanol and biodiesel, while by-products like spent grains and pomace are used to create value-added goods(Blasi et al.,2023).Bioenergy from agricultural waste can be a sustainable alternative to fossil fuels. Technologies like gasification, anaerobic digestion, and bio gasification transform organic waste into renewable energy sources like biogas, syngas, and bioelectricity. This can improve energy security, reduce dependence on fossil fuels, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and help mitigate climate change(Babu et al.,2022).

Digital technologies and precision farming methods are also essential for improving agricultural waste management procedures and minimizing environmental effects. With the use of sensors, drones, GPS, and data analytics, precision agriculture enables farmers to monitor and manage agricultural operations with increased sustainability, efficiency, and precision. Precision farming techniques can help farmers manage farm waste by applying inputs only where and when needed, avoiding nutrient runoff and soil erosion, and optimizing the application of fertilizers and pesticides. Variable rate application systems, for example, can minimize input waste and environmental contamination by adjusting fertilizer and pesticide applications based on real-time data on crop health, soil conditions, and insect pressures.Analogously, agricultural products can now have transparent and verifiable supply chains thanks to digital technologies like blockchain and Internet of Things (IoT) devices. These technologies also make waste tracking, traceability, and management easier across the value chain(Molin et al.,2020).The circular economy is gaining popularity in farm waste management due to its focus on resource management and waste reduction. It encourages reuse, recycling, and repurposing of materials, reducing waste production and maximizing efficiency. By-products can be used in food, feed, and industrial processes, reducing waste and environmental impact. Innovative business models facilitate resource sharing and collaboration(Zucchella et al.,2019).The Biomass Town Initiative in Japan uses locally sourced biomass resources for sustainable agriculture and energy production, reducing waste, greenhouse gas emissions, and creating local jobs, thereby empowering communities and enhancing soil fertility(Feldhoff et al.,2020).

China's Shandong Province is implementing biogas manufacturing for efficient manure management. Anaerobic digesters are used by small dairy and pig farms to produce biogas for cooking and heating, with excess converted into energy for local use. This approach reduces greenhouse gas emissions, improves air quality, and boosts rural economic prosperity. China's innovative waste management approach demonstrates the potential of renewable energy sources and sustainable agriculture(Yan et al.,2021). Andhra Pradesh, India, is promoting Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF) as part of its Community-managed Natural Farming (APCNF) initiative. By 2024, six million farmers are expected to switch to ZBNF, using methods like Jivamrita and Bijamrita, natural pest control, intercropping, and mulching. The initiative offers lower costs, improved soil health, higher crop yields, reduced debt, and increased biodiversity. ZBNF is a financially feasible and environmentally friendly alternative to conventional farming(Kumar et al.,2023).New Zealand's dairy farms in the Waikato region are implementing integrated anaerobic digestion systems to manage waste, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and promoting sustainable farming methods. The digestate is used to improve soil fertility and generate electricity, setting a global standard for sustainable agricultural waste management (Rasapoor et al.,2020).Australia is a global leader in producing biochar, a carbon-rich compound from agricultural waste, which improves soil health, sequesters carbon, and promotes sustainable farming methods. New South Wales' biochar initiatives demonstrate this approach's potential for economic, agricultural, and environmental sustainability.The preceding instances show how innovative and imaginative farm waste management techniques are used all around the world. These initiatives support waste reduction, effective resource utilization, and the promotion of environmental sustainability in the agriculture sector by utilizing cutting-edge technologies and sustainable practices (Hossain et al.,2020).

Approaches for a Greener Agriculture: Increasing the Effectiveness of Waste Conversion

Biomass, derived from crop residues and organic waste, is a crucial source of sustainable energy. It can help mitigate climate change, reduce fossil fuel dependency, and address waste management issues. The study explores biomass's various forms, conversion methods, environmental and economic benefits, challenges, future uses, and its role in a sustainable energy future. Primary types include organic waste, forestry leftovers, and food waste(Kamusoko et al.,2021).Thermochemical methods for biomass conversion include gasification, pyrolysis, torrefaction, and combustion. Pyrolysis produces charcoal, syngas, biooil, gasification produces syngas, and torrefaction yields torrefied biomass. Biochemical processes include fermentation, transesterification, and anaerobic digestion, which converts biomass's sugars and starches into biofuels(Ali et al.,2019). Transesterification is a chemical process that uses alcohol to combine fats and oils to produce biodiesel, a liquid fuel derived from biomass. Biofuels, including bioethanol and biodiesel, can replace fossil fuels by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing energy security. Anaerobic digestion, a natural process, breaks down organic materials without oxygen, reducing emissions in diesel engines(Dhanya et al.,2020). Biogas, a byproduct of hydrolysis, consists of methane and carbon dioxide, with minor amounts of ammonia and hydrogen sulphide. It serves as transportation fuel, power generation, and heating. The process involves hydrolysis, acidogenesis, acetogenesis, and methanogenesis, with enzymes converting complex organic substances into simpler ones(Jiang et al.,2019).

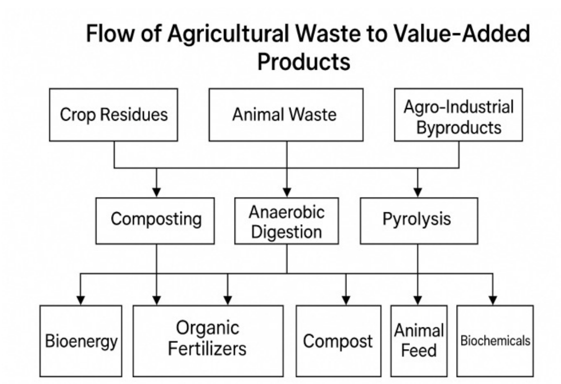

Figure 2: Agricultural waste to value added products.

Biomass is a sustainable energy source with numerous benefits for the economy and environment. It reduces waste, produces less greenhouse gas than fossil fuels, and improves soil quality through nutrient-rich fertilizer production. The biomass industry creates jobs, promotes economic growth in rural areas, and reduces dependency on imported fossil fuels. Farmers and landowners can supplement their income by selling biomass feedstocks or producing biofuels and biogas(Kumar Sarangi et al.,2023).Composting, a natural process involving microorganisms breaking down organic materials, has gained popularity as a sustainable solution to environmental issues. It involves converting organic waste into nutrient-rich soil, improving soil health, waste management, and agricultural sustainability. The process involves fungus, bacteria, and actinomycetes breaking down complex molecules, generating heat and further decomposition.(Singha et al.,2024).Composting is a crucial method for mitigating climate change by storing carbon in soil, balancing greenhouse gas emissions, and promoting biodiversity. It also facilitates plant development through healthy soil ecosystems. Composting feedstock consists of nitrogen-rich and carbon-rich organic materials, with fungi, bacteria, and other microbes playing a crucial role in breaking down organic matter(Goldan et al.,2023). Composting requires ideal microbial activity conditions, including moisture, oxygen, and temperature. Aeration prevents anaerobic conditions and provides oxygen to aerobic bacteria. Regular stirring promotes airflow and microbiological activity. Composting generates heat, typically 120°F to 160°F, which requires temperature monitoring and control to increase decomposition rates and reduce infections(Hettiarachchi et al.,2020).

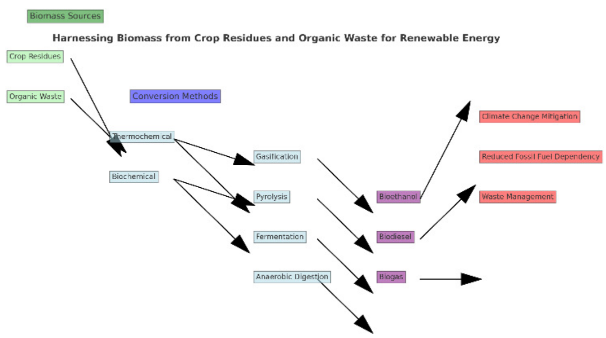

Figure 3: Biomass from Crop Residues and Organic Waste for Renewable Energy

The Impact of Precision Agriculture on Farm Waste Reduction

Precision agriculture optimizes crop health and yield by tracking and correcting variations within and between fields, reducing resource waste and maximizing efficiency. It relies on effective water management, using soil moisture sensors, weather information, and precision irrigation techniques. Automated drip irrigation systems can reduce water waste(Maraveas et al.,2022).Precision agriculture uses GPS technology, data processing, and soil samples to create precise fertilizer maps and Variable Rate Technology (VRT) to ensure optimal application of nutrients. It also employs targeted pest management techniques to reduce chemical resistance and environmental damage in traditional agriculture. Drones with multispectral cameras can identify signs of sickness or pest infestations, allowing precise pesticide application. Precision agriculture uses GPS-guided tractors and harvesters, reducing overlap, fuel consumption, and equipment wear, thereby saving money and reducing environmental impact(Hafeez et al.,2023).

Precision agriculture uses remote sensing and satellite imaging to provide farmers with comprehensive information about crop health and growth patterns. This proactive approach minimizes crop losses, ensures higher yields, and lowers waste. Yield monitors on harvesters gather data on crop production and quality, helping farmers make informed decisions on future planting and management. Precision farming improves crop production by identifying underperforming areas and implementing corrective procedures. It ensures proper seed sowing, nutrient distribution, and uniform crop stands, leading to increased yields. Post-harvest procedures use automated technologies to minimize losses. Properly managed storage facilities preserve ideal conditions, increasing shelf life and reducing spoilage(Molin et al.,2020).Expert farming uses advanced technologies like soil sensors to measure temperature, salinity, moisture content, and nutrient levels, enabling farmers to make informed decisions about soil management, fertilization, and irrigation. Crop sensors assess plant health indicators, allowing for accurate application of inputs like pesticides and fertilizers. NDVI sensors can identify plant stress before it manifests, enabling prompt intervention. Weather stations provide localized meteorological data, aiding farmers in planning tasks like planting and harvesting. Integrating meteorological data with farm management systems minimizes hazards. Drones and high-resolution cameras capture detailed field images, enabling farmers to identify problem areas, track crop development, and assess intervention success(Inoue et al.,2020).Precision pesticide and fertilizer spraying is done with the help of drones. They can precisely apply inputs, minimizing drift and guaranteeing focused chemical application, by hovering near to the ground. This method works particularly well in fields with unlevel terrain or locations that are inaccessible. Certain sophisticated drones may sow seeds straight into the ground. This cutting-edge technology is being researched for use in cover crops and reforestation since drones can effectively plant seeds over large areas while requiring less manpower and time.GPS technology is crucial for precision farming, enabling precise field mapping and navigation, reducing overlap and ensuring uniform input application. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) help map and model agricultural areas, optimize practices, and monitor changes for long-term farm management, enhancing decision-making and field operations planning(Belal et al.,2021).

Strategies of the Circular Economy for a Sustainable Future: Adopting Regenerative Agriculture

The circular economy (CE) is a sustainable approach that aims to minimize waste, maximize resource efficiency, and revive natural systems. It is particularly important for agriculture, as resource optimization is crucial for sustainable food production. CE emphasizes material reuse, recycling, remanufacturing, reuse, and repair, establishing a closed-loop system. It also promotes the restoration of natural systems through renewable energy, biodiversity promotion, and soil nutrient replenishment, promoting sustainable agriculture practices. Animal waste, including agricultural leftovers and byproducts, can be effectively managed through circular economy methods. Crop waste can be composted for soil health, used as animal feed, or used in anaerobic digestion or biomass gasification for renewable energy production(Barros et al.,2020). Utilizing advanced technologies, manure can be used to create concentrated fertilizers, while food processing by-products can be transformed into bio-based materials like biodegradable packaging or bio-plastics. The agriculture industry's large packaging waste can be transformed into useful resources through recycling systems, compostable packaging, and returnable containers. Composting and biochar production are sustainable agricultural methods that manage crop leftovers and animal manure efficiently, address climate change concerns, and improve soil health.

Composting breaks down organic materials, producing nutrient-rich fertilizers. Biochar, produced through pyrolysis, converts biomass into stable carbon, which can stay in soil for centuries. It enhances soil fertility, structure, and microbial activity, improves nitrogen retention, and reduces climate change effects. Incorporating biochar into soils supports agricultural sustainability and reduces greenhouse gas emissions(Nyambo et al.,2020). Governments play a crucial role in promoting a circular economy in agriculture by implementing laws, incentives, and policies for sustainable practices. These include tax exemptions, subsidies, biodegradable packaging, waste management, and nutrient recycling. Government support fosters innovation and increases demand for ecologically friendly agricultural products, accelerating the transition towards a circular system. The circular economy concept aims to reduce waste, optimize resources, and restore ecosystems in agriculture. It can enhance sustainability, create new economic opportunities, and reduce environmental impact. Collaboration between policymakers, researchers, agribusinesses, and farmers is crucial for adopting circular agriculture principles. This approach not only manages waste but also ensures environmental sustainability and long-term food security(Adisa et al.,2024).

Conclusion

In sustainable agriculture, the shift from managing farm waste to turning it into a valuable resource is essential. This calls for an all-encompassing strategy that emphasizes the use of agricultural waste to improve soil fertility, production, and quality. Conventional techniques such as composting and biochar manufacturing aid in improving soil structure, water retention, and carbon sequestration. Anaerobic digestion breaks down organic materials into digestate and biogas, which are then used to produce fertilizer and renewable energy. This process is very useful in intensive cattle operations. Farmers and agribusinesses can be encouraged to embrace sustainable practices by offering financial incentives and providing clear laws. The circular economy advances and innovation is stimulated by government assistance for research and development. Increasing awareness of the advantages of a circular economy influences consumer behaviour and raises the demand for agricultural products made in a sustainable manner.This mentality changes speeds up the move to a more sustainable and circular agriculture system.

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