

Market Prospects for Apple Pomace



PROJECT SUMMARY

Market researchers at ruralconsultancy.com, based at Harper Adams, have evaluated the market potential for dried apple pomace as mulch or soil conditioner.

Many materials can be used as mulches, which is a layer placed to cover the ground, including composted waste, well rotted manure, peat and bark. There are a number of benefits of mulching including weed control, soil moisture retention, soil temperature alteration, improvement of soil structure, addition of soil nutrients and plant hygiene. Soil conditioners are available in all major gardening retail outlets, the most common products being chipped bark and cocoa shells. They are also used in larger quantities by commercial landscaping companies. The apple pomace to be marketed by the client is unusual as it has a very acidic pH. It also breaks down biologically very quickly, transforming itself from mulch to a soil conditioner as the organic matter is transferred from the soil surface to the soil interior. The focus of the survey work was Herefordshire. The primary data was collected using a series of personal interviews with professionals in the landscape and garden business. Respondents were shown a sample of the apple pomace product during the interview and their initial views recorded.

Information was gathered on the factors influencing choice of mulches or soil conditioners, the perceived attributes of the apple pomace product, likelihood of purchase, barriers or reservations regarding purchase, perceptions of cost and general level of interest in the product.

To assess the potential demand garden centres, plant growers, landscapers, garden designers and ornamental garden owners were visited. The use of various alternative mulches and soil conditioners was identified as were the factors influencing their choice. These products included mulch and mix product, cocoa shell, bark products, wood waste, own-produced compost and green waste from the local council. The apple pomace product was considered to be more suitable for use as a soil conditioner than as mulch. Advice was given to the client regarding possible product improvements and benchmark pricing suggestions. Overall a high level of interest was expressed about the dried pomace suggesting the existence of a viable local market.

Paul Custance can be contacted on 01952 815248 or prcustance@harper-adams.ac.uk or look at ruralconsultancy.com for more case studies



KEY FACTS:

Lead Group: Business Management and Marketing

Key Theme: Rural Entrepreneurship and Social Enterprise

Contract Value: N/A

Project Leader: Paul Custance and Stephanie Masters

Project Duration: Four Months

Sponsor/Client: The Bulmer Foundation and the EnviroINNOVATE programme



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General enquiries

To enquire about research, consultancy and training services at Harper Adams University College please contact Dr Andy Brooks:

Email. info@cfri.co.uk

Tel. 01952 815296 (Direct line)

Fax. 01952 814783