

Special Issue

Fertilizer Use, Soil Health and Agricultural Sustainability

Message from the Guest Editors

Humankind has been using chemical (mineral) fertilizers to improve soil fertility and productivity for millennia. Since the 19th century, industrial mineral fertilizers have been increasingly used in agriculture. Their application is believed to be responsible for at least a 50% increase in crop yield in the 20th century. However, the inappropriate use of chemical fertilizers had negative effects on soil health and soil-related ecosystem services. Soil health is defined as the capacity of soil to function as a vital living system, within ecosystem and land-use boundaries, to sustain plant and animal health and productivity, and maintain or improve water and air quality. The major challenge for agricultural sustainability is to conserve ecosystem service delivery while optimizing agricultural yields. This Special Issue addresses the task to find a balance between increasing yields through the use of conventional and novel fertilizers, and the maintenance of soil and environmental health as a basis for the sustainable intensification of the agricultural sector.

Guest Editors

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