



Science
Societies

Soil Health the Focus of a New Collection of Papers

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Improving or maintaining a level of soil health necessary for providing a proper condition for plant growth, cycling of nutrients, and protection of soil and water resources is essential for producing quality and quantity of foodstuffs and protecting the environment. A collection of 20 papers published in Agricultural & Environmental Letters (A&EL) brings together research and commentaries on topics related to soil health. These wide-ranging papers cover topics from soil health indicators to management and yield to the relationship of cover crops to soil health. Below is a sampling of the topics included in this virtual issue (<https://bit.ly/3J6iADm> or scan the QR code).

- Stewart & colleagues (2018) ask the fundamental question: What do we talk about when we talk about soil health? Finding the need for standardization, they call for a common framework when translating soil health research across systems.
- Commentaries by Duncan et al. (2019) and Miner et al. (2020) look at soil health management practices as they relate to phosphorus and crop productivity. Duncan and colleagues observe that soil health is sensitive to management impacts on yield while Miner and colleagues note that yield outcomes of soil health practices are variable and regionally specific.
- Sprunger et al. (2020) examine soil biological health across diverse systems and find that perennial polycultures have the ability to stabilize soil carbon.
- Given two adjacent fields with contrasting histories, Svedin et al. (2022) compare the legacy of management on soil health and grain productivity. They found that the historic pasture maintained greater yield and soil health even after a decade of grain crop production.

The full collection of soil health papers found in this virtual issue shows that soil health is a complex topic and growing field and that holistic approaches allow for all agricultural disciplines to contribute to this important area of research.

References

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