

The road to soil health: Sustainable soil fertility management

A LIVING SOIL INDUCES:

- less diseases
- less weeds
- less work
- better water availability
- better nutrient availability
- more and healthier production



THE AGROECOLOGICAL APPROACH

OBSERVE



EXPERIMENT

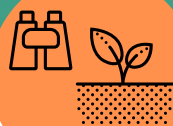
THINK

'Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better'.
Maya Angelou



OBSERVE YOUR SOIL

- Take a cubic clod of soil with a spade till the first 30 cm
- Assess compaction by observing how much effort do you need to drive in the spade and how deep you can easily go
- Open the clod and smell it
- Assess soil structure by observing layers and aggregates
- Observe how deep roots can grow
- Observe presence and abundance of living beings (e.g. earthworms)
- Observe the presence of crop residues and soil organic matter



FACILITATE SOIL BIODIVERSITY: STOP KILLING LIFE, BUT FEED IT, CREATE THE RIGHT CONDITIONS FOR SOIL LIFE.

- Don't leave the soil bare. You can introduce cover crops and temporary grassland in your annual crop rotations.
- Reduce soil tillage: Tillage modifies soil structure and crop residue distribution and in turn affects the ability of soil micro-organisms to control pathogens and to release nutrients for crops.

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MONITOR ORGANIC MATTER

- Plan a sampling in your farm and do soil analysis
- Assess your soil organic carbon content



ALWAYS EXPERIMENT IN YOUR OWN FARM!

E.g. try cover crops mixtures in part of your field.



START ACTING NOW!

Do you think you are already doing the best you can?

There is always room for improvement, soil is our heritage, we cannot deplete it, we should restore it.

CONNECT: YOU DON'T NEED TO DO IT ALONE!

Join farm networks, share your experience, ask for help.



If you need further support, download the free of charge 'SoilApp' application which aims to guide farmers step by step towards self-evaluation of soil health based on the spade test. By using the application for recording for soil observations, you will be able to share your findings, learn from other users and seek further advice to the users' community.

This application has been developed within the framework of the CAPSELLA H2020 European Commission project in a participatory way with two European agroecological farmer networks, and has been validated already by several European farmers and technicians.

https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=eu.capsella.soilhealth.spade_test&hl=it
(Free download on Google Play)

<https://soilhealth.capsella.eu> (web-based version)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GLsjjNuMSjQ> (introductory cartoon)

For any further information on our work, activities and webinars,
please visit: www.agroecology-europe.org

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