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# Sustainable practices for a healthy soil



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# Short introduction:

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# Quick introduction to Copa and Cogeca

- A joint secretariat of **COPA (the European farmers)** and **COGECA (the European agri-cooperatives)** since 1962
- **45 Working Parties, which deal with market and policy developments**
- **Initiate and prepare joint Copa and Cogeca positions**
- **Topics:** commodities, cooperative affairs, rural development, biotechnology, the environment, animal health & welfare...
- **Horizontal Affairs:** Forestry and Bioeconomy; Environmental policy; Research and innovation; Plant and Animal health and welfare; Sustainable consumption and production; Promotion policy; Social issues and Women in agriculture; Feed; Risk management
- **Commodities & Trade:** 25 agricultural sectors covered; Trade negotiations; Organic production; Non-food issues; Technologies; Breeding; Agricultural Commodity Markets



# Sustainability & Soil: the bedrock of how we produce

- **Sustainability:**

- Economic
- Environmental
- Social



- **We need a holistic consideration of each farm and farm type in order to take account of every aspect of its operation (soil type and climate conditions) and the balances within its agro-ecosystem.**
- **It is essential to bring together all stakeholders in the sector: farmers, researchers, advisers and policy makers to co-create innovative solutions that tackle local solutions**

# It should be remembered...

- The transition towards a more Sustainable Agriculture didn't start today or yesterday
- European agriculture has to meet increasing demand for food, feed, bio-based goods whilst doing more for less
- A viable European Agriculture sector needs to be both productive and sustainable



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# Healthy soil

There is no single standard – the soil varies depending on (soil bedrock) soil foundation of that land parcel

That can be peat, brown-earth, sandy, clay, podzols etc.

Different from field to field, from farm to farm

For example, healthy soils could be measured via:

- Fertility
- Good structure
- Rich in nutrients
- Resistant to erosion



# Data is essential but also how you use it

## Practices to improve soil quality

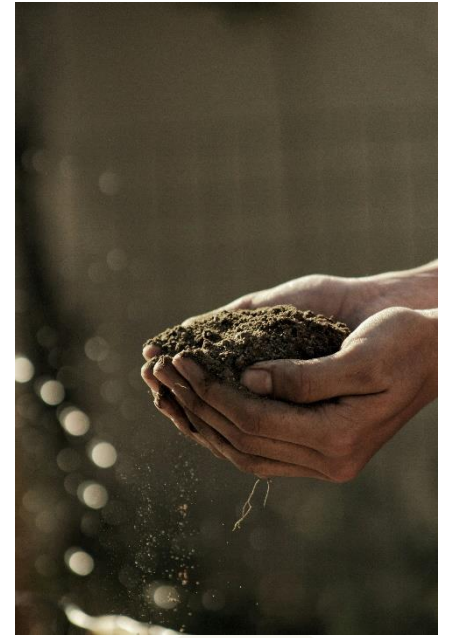
- Nutrient recycling (right quantity at the right time)
- Soil liming (correction of pH)
- Soil moisture regulation (irrigation and drainage)
- Technical solutions to reduce soil compaction (Tyre pressure, double wheels, tracked tractors, umbilical slurry spreaders...)





# Practices to improve soil quality

- Crop rotation/crop diversification
- Cover crops + management of PPPs
- Min-till, strip-till, periodic ploughing in certain soils
- Habitats for beneficial Organisms (Landscape elements – hedgerows, cover crops, ditches, wetlands, buffer strips, field margins)



# Solutions that would help improve soil health

- Markets and stable prices for new crops (more market crops)
- Bring the EU Protein plan to life
- Equal development of animal husbandry in all regions of the EU
- Greater investments in applied science
- Availability of financial resources for investments
- Transfer of practical knowledge

**Setaside does not mean improved soil health!**



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**Thank you for  
listening**



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