

Publication

Soil Conservation in Europe: Wish or Reality?

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Nearly all of Europe is affected by soil erosion. A major policy response is required to reverse the impacts of erosion in degraded areas, particularly in light of the current climate change and water crisis. Soil loss occurs not because of any lack of knowledge on how to protect soils, but a lack in policy governance. The average rate of soil loss by sheet and rill erosion in Europe is $2 \text{ center dot } 46 \text{ Mgha}(-1) \text{ yr}(-1)$. To mitigate the impacts of soil erosion, the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy has introduced conservation measures which reduce soil loss by water erosion by 20% in arable lands. Further economic and political action should rebrand the value of soil as part of ecosystem services, increase the income of rural land owners, involve young farmers and organize regional services for licensing land use changes. In a changing World of 9 billion people with the challenge of climate change, water scarcity and depletion of soil fertility, the agriculture economy should evolve taking into account environmental and ecological aspects. Copyright (c) 2016 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

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