FERTILE SOIL

THE SOIL INITIATIVE
“Improving the quality of soil is essential for the flavour and especially the shelf life of our mangos from Mali.”

“Soil fertility is a matter for the entire food chain. No matter which sector you are involved in; as a trader, marketeer or quality manager, this is an inescapable topic.”

“Soil is becoming an increasingly important topic for all of our production sites. In the Soil Initiative, we work with expert partners on innovative solutions.”
HEALTHY SOIL EQUATES TO HEALTHY BUSINESS

Are you a grower, trader, food manufacturer or retailer? Fertile soil is worth its weight in gold. For every player in the food chain. Good soil quality leads to greater crop yields, better quality and nutritional value of products and a greater security of delivery.

Your company’s success and future viability may well be linked to something very basic: the soil. Quite literally “the roots of a business”. Time to get ahead!

A SCARCE WORLD

As you know, by 2050 we will need twice as much food as we do now to feed the world. By that time, 4 in every 5 people will live in towns and cities. How do we provide affordable, socially responsible and tasty food for all of those people?

However, every year we lose 100 million hectares of fertile land through unsustainable agriculture and the expansion of cities. Climate change and droughts affect our business. As agri-food businesses, we are dependent on nature. We need smart solutions and other methods to prevent us from losing our natural capital.

This may have already affected your everyday work and you are contending with volatile or a sharp increase in prices and growing scarcity of products and raw materials. As a business, how do you safeguard the future and how do you deal with this? How do we guarantee a future-proof sector, which can continue to trade in (or market) affordable, socially responsible and healthy food? This calls for innovative thinking and market and society-orientated entrepreneurship. This is a matter of considerable urgency and it presents great opportunities.
“BUSINESSES THAT ARE ABLE TO MAINTAIN THE FERTILITY OF THEIR LAND CAN CONTINUE TO SUPPLY PRODUCTS. THAT IS NOT ONLY CRUCIAL FOR PRODUCERS, BUT ALSO FOR TRADERS AND RETAILERS.”

“THERE IS A GROWING Realization of THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL STABILITY FOR TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT. PEOPLE NEED TO FEED THEMSELVES AND THE SATELLITE SYSTEMS NEED TO SUPPORT THE LOCAL ECONOMIES.”

“...
SOIL = BUSINESS

A healthy business starts with good fertile ground – literally. Good soil quality offers greater crop yields, better quality and nutritional value of products and a greater security of delivery. As a trader in the agri-food sector, you can take charge of this in a simple way, to ensure a healthy business in the future. How? Simple: by working on solutions in conjunction with local producers with which they can increase their yield and maintain the fertility of their land. You really can make a difference in countries where soil management is less advanced, such as in Africa and Latin America. It is possible to improve soil quality at producers in just a few simple steps, which delivers both short-term and long-term results. Obtaining products, contributing knowledge... surely a logical combination?

THE SOIL INITIATIVE

The rapidly expanding CSR Network Food & Agribusiness organises meetings and brings together the various parties from the entire food chain in order to address individual challenges together. Within the network, various working groups have arisen, including The Soil Initiative. Market leaders in the agri-food sector have united to start sectoral projects and to share knowledge and experiences. Traders, retailers, producers, specialists and parties offering innovative solutions can participate in this initiative. Would you like to join?
Honduran-grown melons feed the soil
Simple, but effective. This is how you could describe the method currently being tested by Total Produce at its melon-grower in Honduras. Residual waste from the crop is processed into compost, which is used to improve the soil quality. A win-win situation for all parties. With the help of soil experts from Soil & More, the idea was born to process waste flows – originating from leaves and fruit – into liquid compost, otherwise known as compost tea. An idea which is relatively easy to apply, according to Lennart Visser.

"Using an irrigation system, the compost tea can be spread on the land as a soil improver. A small investment early on in the year at a melon producer with a 3,000-hectare farm has encouraged the producer to invest in the quality of his products. This has improved our relationship with the producer.”

EXAMPLES OF PROJECTS

AN UNDERSTANDING OF SOIL QUALITY WITH THE SOIL FERTILITY KIT
In conjunction with entrepreneurs from the Soil Initiative, Alterra (Wageningen UR) is developing the Soil Fertility Kit. This toolkit consists of an online tool into which you input data regarding the soil, location and the crop. A diagnosis and management advice is then provided on how to improve and maintain the productivity of the soil (in both the short and long-term). The toolkit shows the actions that need to be taken for a healthy soil, the costs associated with this and the payback time. Pilot projects performed at companies are provided with financial support through the voucher for International Social Corporate Responsibility issued by CSR Netherlands.
Would you also like to join?

Would you like to join the Soil Initiative, or would you like to learn more first of all? If so, please contact Gerard Teuling: g.teuling@mvonederland.nl 06 52689426 or visit Soilinitiative.nl.

Under grensverleggers.nl/sectoren/tuinbouw you can read the stories of entrepreneurs who participate in The Soil Initiative. At agrifood.futureproof.community you can also get in touch with the entrepreneurs involved in the initiative.

The Soil Initiative is part of the rapidly expanding CSR Network Food & Agribusiness of CSR Netherlands. Increasing numbers of traders, retailers and innovative expert partners are becoming involved in the initiative, which has now also widened its scope to other agri-food branches, such as coffee.

For an up-to-date list of the participants, see Soilinitiative.nl