



Agronomy and crop Nutrition: an African Prospective

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Abstract:

Population in sub-Saharan Africa is expected to double to about 2.4 billion by 2050. Agriculture is the backbone of African economy and central to the way of life of many African people. The sector accounts for about 16 per cent of continent's GDP, 60 per cent of its labour force and 20 per cent of product exports. It also provides the main source of work and income for 90 per cent of Africa's rural population. African agricultural productivity falls short currently - lagging far behind other developing regions and the continent is still prone to periodic food shortages. Because of this, agricultural transformation is the only way to ensure food security, zero hunger and the absence of malnutrition in Africa.

Crop yields across Africa are typically depressed due to the low use of agricultural inputs and a dependency on rain-fed agriculture. Indeed, only six per cent of Africa's cultivated land is irrigated, currently, and average fertilizer consumption in sub-Saharan Africa is estimated at just 17 kilograms per hectare of cropland. That compares to average world fertilizer consumption of 135 kg/ha.

To meet these gaps - in crop productivity, fertilizer use and irrigation - Africa needs to transform its agricultural value chain. Adopting advanced agronomic methods and raising the level of inputs such as fertilizers will be key.

At present, low productivity is also exacerbated by insecure/fragmented land holdings and the slow adoption of agricultural technology. The majority of Africa's small-holder farmers have little or no experience with fertilizers and poor knowledge about their potential to enhance crop yields and quality. Even for farmers who may be aware of fertilizers, the majority do not know the right types and application rates for their particular soils and crops.



Biography:

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