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New statistics

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PREFACE

The global agricultural sector is currently facing the twofold challenge of feeding a growing population while preserving the environment for future generations. Over a third of our soils are degraded and inefficient nutrient management is damaging natural resources. Proper soil and nutrient management is therefore critical to ensuring the productivity and sustainability of current and future agricultural systems. Global initiatives like the Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) conceptual framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Global Soil Partnership (GSP), and the Global Soil Biodiversity Initiative highlight the need to reverse soil degradation and increase the nutrient use efficiency of fertilizers, manures and other nutrients applied to agricultural soils in order to contribute to achieving various targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (e.g. SDG 1, 2, 3, 6, 13 and 15).

Agricultural statistics are essential to assess, monitor and measure progress towards achieving national and global development goals. FAO plays a pivotal role in compiling and disseminating agricultural data for global monitoring, and in the development of standards and guidance for collecting, analyzing and interpreting agricultural statistics. FAO collects detailed country data on the production and consumption of the three main agricultural nutrients in chemical fertilizers – nitrogen (N), phosphate (P_2O_5) and potash (K_2O) – via the fertilizers questionnaire, and disseminates this data on the FAOSTAT database. These statistics cover about 200 countries and territories over the period 1961 to the present. Although organic fertilizers are of agronomic importance, supplying a wide range of nutrients together with organic matter to soils, the relevant country data collection has rather low response rates, so that country statistics on organic inputs are at present not disseminated in FAOSTAT alongside the information on chemical fertilizers. Rather, FAO estimates and disseminates analytical databases on manure-nitrogen

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