

Land Abandonment: Positive and Negative Effects on Soil Quality, Ecosystem Services, and Environmental Functioning

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Message from the Guest Editors

Land abandonment is widespread around the world and encompasses different land-uses, such as orchards, croplands, and rangelands. Often, land abandonment stems from on-site degradation processes, such as extreme compaction, soil erosion, soil organic carbon depletion, or salinization/sodification. Such processes are likely to reduce the primary productivity of desired plant species or crops, or cause the succession or invasion of undesired vegetation species. Regardless, land abandonment may be related to changes in socio-economic and cultural preferences, and, specifically, to urbanization and related modifications in the labor market. An abundance of evidence indicates that land abandonment halts soil erosion and salinization, triggering the buildup of soil horizons and subsequently improving soil functioning and ecosystem health. At the same time, other evidence shows that land abandonment accelerates land degradation processes. The objective of this Special Issue is to demonstrate the complexity of the topic of land abandonment while highlighting the agro-environmental challenges and opportunities as well as related policy and socio-economic aspects.



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Message from the Editor-in-Chief

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