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Global soil week: Put soil security on the global agenda

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An international coalition of scientists has launched the Soil Carbon Initiative (see go.nature.com/onhgcv), convened by the United States Studies Centre and the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Sydney in Australia, to bring policy on soil security in line with that on food and water security.

Soil security refers to the maintenance and improvement of soils worldwide so that they can continue to provide food, fibre and fresh water, contribute to energy and climate sustainability and help to maintain biodiversity and protect ecosystem goods and services.

Soil carbon needs to be monitored and managed — as was discussed during Global Soil Week in Berlin last month, at a meeting organized by the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies in Potsdam, Germany, and its international partners (see www.globalsoilweek.org). Also on the agenda were topics such as carbon trading and 'zero net land degradation' (see go.nature.com/d1y4g3).

Although scientists have made significant inroads into understanding soil function, international policy must keep pace with these advances.

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