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WHAT IS SOIL HEALTH OR SOIL FERTILITY?

Soil health is the capacity of soil to function as a living thing within an ecosystem. *Ecosystem* refers to all the living things in the environment around us (micro-organisms, plants, animals, humans) *and* their interaction with one another and the environment (the air, climate, soil, sun, weather, etc.).

Healthy soil sustains micro-organisms living within it, promotes the health of plants and animals above it, and maintains and enhances the quality of water in our rivers and of the air around us.

Growing various types of plants that are appropriate for the soil and climate is very important for soil health. Different plants provide different types of food for the different micro-organisms in the soil. In return, the micro-organisms feed plants with water and essential nutrients.

Healthy soil reduces the need for external inputs (fertilisers and pesticides) and this means increased advantages for farmers.