



A Handbook for the Field Assessment of Land Degradation

Michael A. Stocking, Niamh Murnaghan

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With the increasing concern over rural livelihoods and the food security of poor communities in developing countries, it is vital that land quality is maintained. Yet, land degradation is widespread and is lowering the productive capacity of the land in these countries. This practical handbook presents simple, non-technical indicators for assessing land degradation in the field. Based on the perspective of the farmer, the methods selected lend meaning to real farming situations, helping the field professional to understand not only the impact of degradation but also the benefits to be gained from reversing it. The handbook shows how to calculate indicators such as those of soil loss, explains the interpretation of results and in particular how combinations of different indicators can give conclusive evidence of the severity of land degradation. The focus of the book is firmly on understanding the farmer's interaction with the land, and how environmental protection, food security and the well-being of rural land users may be assured. With detailed figures, photographs, worked examples and sample forms based on assessment techniques validated by field professionals in Africa, Asia and Latin America, this will be an essential training manual will be invaluable for field-workers in NGOs and in governmental and educational institutions. It will also be of interest to researchers and academics in development, environment and agriculture.

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