



# Manifest

**Organic matter:**  
bringing life to Dutch soils



## Use the 6<sup>th</sup> Action Program Nitrate Directive to improve the position of organic matter in Dutch fertiliser legislation!

*We call upon the Dutch parliament to use the 6th Action Program Nitrate Directive to improve the position of organic matter in Dutch fertiliser legislation. This improvement shall acknowledge the importance of organic matter for soil fertility, biodiversity, combating climate change and the circular economy.*

### **The importance of organic matter**

A good soil structure and sufficient organic matter are of priceless value for soil fertility and for climate objectives.

#### ***...for soil fertility***

A healthy, fertile soil forms the basis for sustainable yields and healthy food. Organic matter contains essential nutrients and trace elements which improve the vitality and the nutritive value of crops. Organic matter also improves the water retention capacity of soils, and reduces risks of emissions to ground water and surface water. In addition, organic matter contributes to healthy soil life and improved soil resistance, which reduces the need for pesticides. A good soil life also enriches soil biodiversity. This will benefit farmland & meadow birds.

#### ***...for climate objectives***

Soils are an essential element in combating climate change. Increasing organic matter in soils is an effective matter to store carbon. An increase of the organic matter content of Dutch agricultural soils with 1% equals an annual CO<sub>2</sub>-emission reduction of 168 Mtonnes CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalents, almost the total annual greenhouse gas emission of the Netherlands. In other words: farmers can play an important role in long-term storage of carbon and climate change mitigation.





## Organic matter in Dutch fertiliser legislation

Organic matter contents in Dutch soils are under pressure. This is because of the one-sided focus of fertiliser legislation on reducing nutrient emissions from soils. In addition, other functions of the soil are still undervalued. There is an urgent need for a soil policy which is integrated and sustainable. Soils shall remain productive and fit for food production.

Preparations for the 6<sup>th</sup> Action Program Nitrate Directive are on the way, including an evaluation of current fertiliser legislation. This process provides the opportunity to amend fertiliser legislation, in order to allow sustainable soil management and customised organic matter management within the conditions set by the European Nitrate Directive and the Water Framework Directive.

This also fits with the ambitions laid down in the Government's circular economy program 'The Netherlands circular in 2050', which states that *'it will be explored which measures can be taken to bring more stabilised organic matter in soils, e.g. by recovering organic matter from residues, to improve soil quality, store carbon and combat soil subsidence'*



## What is required?

The Manifest Partners wish to promote the transition towards a circular economy by restoration of soil biodiversity and reducing emissions to soil, water and air. The Partners envision an important role for adequate soil management, including organic matter management, in reaching sustainable agriculture and climate objectives.

We, the Manifest Partners, call upon the Dutch parliament to:

1. Adapt fertiliser legislation to improve possibilities for increased organic matter application within relevant environmental conditions;
2. Adapt fertiliser legislation to allow customised solutions at individual farm level and in regions. This shall ensure adequate feeding of soil and crops within the applicable environmental conditions. This includes a stronger role for soil health in cultivation plans, using lessons from organic farming practices;
3. Help increase the contribution of agriculture to the circular economy, by improving the possibilities for application of organic soil improvers produced from residues;
4. Implement the '4 ‰ Initiative' in the Netherlands, thereby using sustainable soil management for climate change mitigation;
5. Assess possible incentives for good organic matter management by farmers. Assess in particular the potential role of the 'soil passport';
6. Make sustainable soil management and organic matter management a precondition in contracts for short lease and land transactions (e.g. by using the 'soil passport');
7. Facilitate knowledge building and dissemination about the importance of organic matter in soils, amongst policy makers, farmers, other market players in agricultural chains, NGOs and other stakeholders.



## De Manifest Partners

Agrifirm

Biohuis

Bionext

BoerenNatuur.nl - Agrarisch natuur- en landschapsbeheer

Brabantse Milieufederatie

Brancheorganisatie Akkerbouw

BVOR – Branche Vereniging Organische Reststoffen

CZAV –Coöperatieve Zuidelijke Aan- en Verkoopvereniging U.A.

Dutch Biorefinery Cluster

FNLI – Federatie Nederlandse Levensmiddelen Industrie

GroentenFruit Huis

LandschappenNL

Louis Bolk Instituut

LTO Nederland

Meststoffen Nederland

MVO Nederland

Natuur & Milieu

Natuurmonumenten

NAV - Nederlandse Akkerbouw Vakbond

Nederlands Instituut voor Ecologie (NIOO-KNAW)

NEVEDI – Nederlandse Vereniging Diervoederindustrie

NMI – Nutriënten Management Instituut

Nutriëntenplatform

Rabobank Food & Agri

Stichting Veldleeuwierik

Suiker Unie

Ulebelt namens coöperatie van buurtcompostinitiatieven

Urgenda

Vereniging Afvalbedrijven

De Waard Eetbaar Landschap

26 oktober 2016



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& MILIEU



brancheorganisatie akkerbouw



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