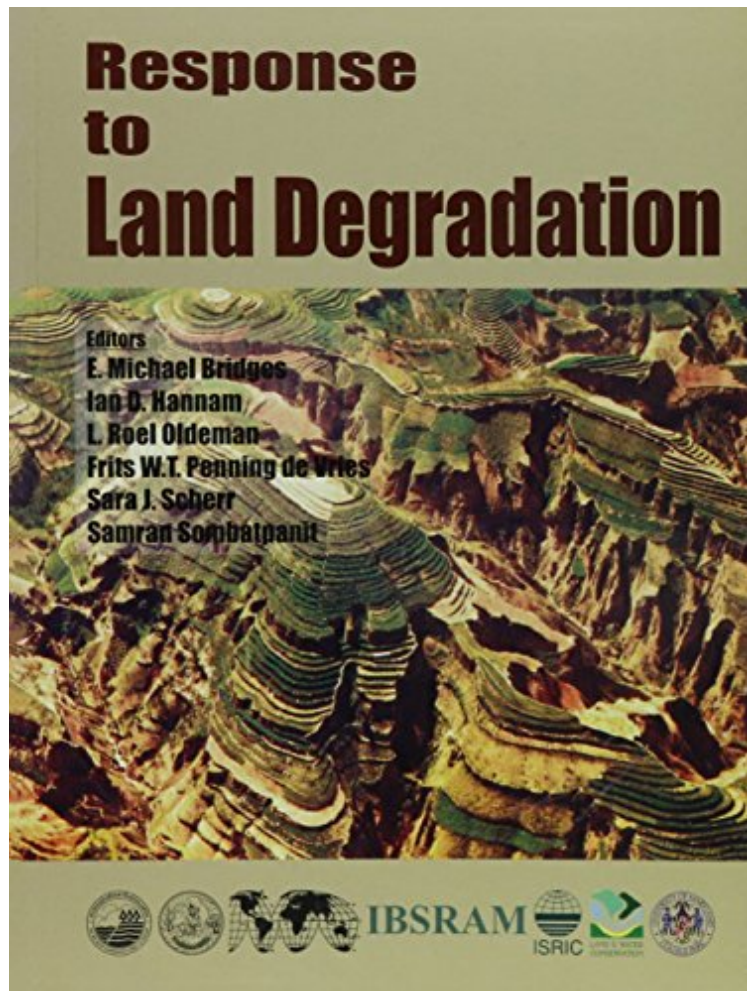


Response to Land Degradation

E M Bridges, E.M. Bridges, Ian D. Hannam, L. Roel Oldeman, Frits W.T. Penning de Vries, Sara J. Scherr, Samran Sombatpanit

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E M Bridges, E.M. Bridges, Ian D. Hannam, L. Roel Oldeman, Frits W.T. Penning de Vries, Sara J. Scherr, Samran Sombatpanit : Response to Land Degradation before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Response to Land Degradation:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Updating degradation data, technologies and policies By Arie ShahrBook review : "RESPONSE TO LAND DEGRADATION" E.M. Bridges, I.D. Hannam, L.R. Oldeman, F.W.T. Penning de Vries, S.J. Scherr, S. Sombatpanit (Editors). Science Publishers, Inc., NH, USA (510 pp.) 2001. Conservationists and other close professionals ask themselves for a long time: why land degradation processes (mainly affecting farmers but also other people), are increasing worldwide, damaging all countries (and especially "third world" areas) - in spite of years of work and the large sums of money invested to counter them and conserve the

land resource? This collection of papers (chosen among those presented at the Int'l Conference on Soil Degradation held in Khon Kaen, Thailand, 1999) - brings forward various answers to this serious question (including new approaches and strategies for conservation, and also new terminologies, such as "good land husbandry" and "sustained land-use"), aimed to overcome the many obstacles on the way of safeguarding the production-capability of land, undermined by the pressure of increasing populations who need more food, timber, fiber, and feed for more livestock. Choosing between the usual "full proceedings" edition, or inviting thematic papers on a pre-planned basis - the editors adopted a wise middle-way (also summarizing each of the 11 thematic chapters with a comprehensive introduction). Obviously, there are always drawbacks in compromises (among those - repetition of the ritual-research "problem background" in most papers). On the other hand, the interested reader will benefit identifying varying perceptions of the core-problems - which represent genuine differences in physical and socio-cultural environments, professional background experience and personal attitudes. Among the 39 articles and 50 "boxes", many papers focus, as usual, on identification and assessment of degradation and its damages - an almost representative sample of the world-wide actual problem. A lesser number - on technologies of land husbandry (part of the response); only a few papers and "boxes" really address national land economic policy and conservation legislation - those pre-requisites for sustained land use and conservation (I. Hannam and others). The review of Russian century-experience (A. Gennadiyev) is much instructive for understanding the complexity of conservation problems and their linkage to major national policies. Other important lessons can also be learned from Chapt. 5 (S.J. Scherr and others), the New South Wales application and adoption models (I.J. Packer, Chap. 8), and the World Bank review (Chapt. 10), - to mention only a few of the many valuable papers presented. In the summary to his paper T. Enters concludes: "as long as the framework of economic and institutional conditions is not conducive to conservation, direct incentives will remain ineffective in promoting innovative technologies, and land degradation will continue apace". Two comments: (1) "Institutional conditions" would eventually include a National Agency for Soil (or Land) Conservation (like a Service or Department, besides a Research Institute) - its organization, professional staff training and operational framework - planning and application. These are at present very weak or non-existent in most "third world" countries, where the international "project" pattern, usually limited in area and period of operation, constitutes the usual activity. (2) The USDA-NRCS (formerly SCS) 65-year precious experience, mobilizing farmers, public, government and legislature to the conservation effort - has proven itself much successful, and may well be studied and made use of everywhere (not only in developed nations). - The fact that there were no presentations on these issues, at the conference, brings to light a shaded side of the "problem" to be "responded": most conservationists still overlook the major political aspects of conservation, and neglect the required actions to be taken in this respect. This book presents an excellent, almost worldwide "state of the problem" update, very useful and recommended to help national conservationists and decision-making politicians work together and set-up adequate conservation "responses", adapted to their countries' conditions. (Reviewed by Arie` Shahar, member, WASWC)

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. International State-of-the-Art Publication

By A Customer

Response to Land Degradation provides a state-of-the-art analysis of the causes and effects of land degradation, and the wide range of human responses. Over 140 leading experts--soil scientists, geographers, economists, extension specialists, policy analysts and others from diverse fields--provide the reader a comprehensive picture of the contemporary state of global land resources. The driving forces that cause land degradation and the impacts they have upon the economy and environment are discussed and illustrated by case studies. The most up to date tools for monitoring and assessing land degradation are described. The latter half of the book presents and critically evaluates diverse technical, institutional and policy interventions that have been used around the world to prevent or reverse degradation, including major international initiatives. Case materials are presented from dozens of countries in both temperate and tropical regions. 510 pp., index, 10 color plates.

This work is intended for advanced readers interested in methods of sustainable land management - the prevention and control of land degradation. It offers a coherent view of the situation concerning land degradation and the human response to the problem. It is generally recognized that technological solutions alone cannot solve the problems of land degradation. This book discusses the role of land use and land management policies, programmes, insitutional innovations, and economic incentives for the control and prevention of land degradation. Special attention is given to legal issues at the international level and in individual countries.