

Sonett supports Soil Fertility Fund

Eco-Pioneer makes employees godparents to soil



Picture of a spade test

Sonett, the producer of organic laundry detergents and cleaning agents, supported, once again, a special initiative at the turn of the year: "The Bodenfruchtbarkeitsfonds" (Soil Fertility Fund) of the non-profit "Bio-Stiftung Schweiz" (Organic Foundation Switzerland). Its aim is to not only preserve the fertility of agricultural soils, but to sustainably restore and enhance it. It is in this area that quite a dramatic development is taking place. Due to traditional agriculture's over-exploitation of the soils at present, soil fertility is continually degrading. The EU even reckons with annual losses of humus soil amounting to 38 billion Euros for their member countries. The reasons being monocultures and industrial agriculture as well as increasing urbanisation and sealing which destroy areas of ecologic value.

By means of their donation Sonett wishes to draw people's attention to this ever so important topic. To quote Beate Oberdorfer, managing director of the company: "This initiative and our company have in common our concern to not only preserve and use natural resources but to do something towards their regeneration."

For each of the 75 Sonett employees the enterprise donated 100 Euros, thus making them all so-called godparents to the soil.

Godparents take responsibility for 2,500 square metres of soil which corre-

spond exactly to the area that a human being necessitates to be provided with agricultural produce.

32 organic and Demeter farms are partners in this soil fertility initiative, in the Lake Constance area, with more than 1,000 hectare cultivated land. The fund monies are used to support humus-creating measures and composting. The soil is regularly checked using the spade diagnosis and laboratory tests – accompanied by research projects and further training courses. The Soil Fertility Fund wants to grant farmers, enterprises and consumers the opportunity to jointly take responsibility and create public awareness.

The **Organic Foundation Switzerland, backer of the Soil Fertility Fund**, in 1987 was founded by Rainer Bächli as a non-profit foundation. The foundation's aim is to support sustainable and environmental agriculture as well as ecological consumer behaviour.

SONETT was established in 1977 and ranges amongst the pioneers of ecological laundry detergents and cleaning agents. The enterprise is property of a foundation, is sustainably committed to ecological, social and ethical values, and, for years has had an impact on quality standards in the field of ecological laundry detergents and cleaners.

Re picture: A photo taken by Sonett employees at one of the „farm days“ illustrating cutting the soil with a spade; it demonstrates, in a close-up of topsoil, a lovely, fluffy consistency and the roots thoroughly penetrating the soil horizon. The seed mixture is chosen in a way that enables multiple root penetration and build-up of the soil horizon, on the one hand, and growth of biodiverse hay as animal feed, on the other.

www.bodenfruchtbarkeitsfonds.bio

www.bio-stiftung.ch

www.sonett.eu

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Background of the Soil Fertility Fund

Permanently fertile soil is our life's essential basis. Earth's entire existence is dependent on the fertility of this vivid soil stratum which is mostly of a thickness of only 30 cm. Human beings and animals alike can only subsist if efficient metabolic processes between soil life and plant roots are enabled. Coupled with sun light this creates organic substances, which we need to be able to live.

Intensive agriculture and urbanisation destroy areas of ecological value. The EU

reckons with an annual loss of fertile soil **amounting to 38 billion Euros** in its Member States alone. The causes thereof are erosion, desertification, salinization, sealing and over-exploitation of areas. According to an **UN report** the loss amounts to **6.3 – 10.6 trillion dollars** (approx. 5.6 to 9.4 trillion Euros) per year. (Source: Spiegel online/dpa Sept. 15, 2015 <http://bit.ly/1idisk>). The accumulated losses are e. g. values of crop yields and clean water. According to the UN report the annual loss equals 10 to 17 per cent of the gross social product worldwide.

The qualitative consequences are decline in biodiversity, decrease of soil fertility and carbon content, lower water-retention capacity, disruption of gas and nutrient cycles as well as reduced degradation of contaminants. **This leads to further consequences such as flooding, erosion and landslides.** Soil degradation has a direct impact on the quality of water, air and foodstuffs and furthermore negatively affects biodiversity and the climate.

What is the cause of this situation?

Male and female farmers are the „guards of soil fertility“ – but **their number rapidly dwindles.** At present, only one third of the working people worldwide is active in agriculture; **in Germany it's even less than two per cent.** An ever-decreasing number of people is concerned about areas of the earth to be used for agriculture, which leads to increasing environmental and socio-economic problems – including for the land managers themselves.

Economical necessities force farmers to take a direction that endanger our livelihoods, one major reason for this being the **operating costs for natural cultivation which are not covered by the prices for produce.** Cultivation giving preference to the natural processes of soil fertility naturally requires more effort than industrial, conventional cultivation.

www.bodenfruchtbarkeitsfonds.bio

http://www.bodenfruchtbarkeit.bio/images/pdf/BFF_Dossier_09_2017.pdf