

Director's Viewpoint

From The Desk of Rattan Lal

Soil Health Act and The Farm Bill 2024

Implementation of environment policy act is a historical tradition in the U.S.A. Existing Acts and Resolution in favor of environmental improvement include: i) The Clean Water (CWA) of 1965 (P.L. 89-234) is designed to regulate discharge of pollutants into the waters of U.S.A. and establish quality standards for surface waters, ii) Clean Air Act (CAA, 42 U.S.C. 7401) was authorized by U.S. EPA in 1970 to establish National Air Quality standards to protect public health and environment, iii) The Agriculture Resilience Act is aimed at giving farmers the tools they need to become net-zero by 2040. However, clean water and air can only be achieved if soils of agro-ecosystems are healthy to scrub out pollutants. Furthermore, achieving net-zero emissions from agriculture is a good start but agriculture must become negative emission technology (NET). Transformation of agro-ecosystems is needed to become an effective solution to global warming and other environmental issues. Thus, agro-ecosystems must be a major sink for atmosphere CO₂ and drastically reduce emission of CH₄ and NO₂. For this innovative and a win-win-win solution, there is an urgency to implement Soil Health Act (SHA) which compliments the existing three Acts. The objective is to empower farmers and land managers to adopt site-specific best management practices through payments for ecosystem services at the flat rate of \$50/acre per year. The SHA will be in accord with the Senate Soil Protection Resolution 440 of 2008 and is needed to transform agriculture as a nature-positive industry.



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