



Building on the AEI to craft tools for monitoring complex interconnected environmental policies for agriculture

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For over 20 years OECD, in co-operation with Eurostat, and later with FAO, have developed Agri-Environmental Indicators (AEI) that cover key aspects of agriculture's impact on the environment. Continuously refined and updated, the indicators are considered state of the art, despite acknowledged gaps and weaknesses. Nonetheless the AEI generally remain basic data on agriculture's impact on the environment: such as water quality, soil erosion, greenhouse gas emissions, etc. As a guide to policy their usefulness is greatest in addressing a reasonably isolated environmental issue, such as pollution of waterways from fertilisers. Today agri-environmental policy makers are increasingly addressing multi-faceted problems in a holistic manner. Therefore to support evidence-based analysis behind complex policy initiatives, the agri-environmental indicators and other contextual data need to be brought together, in approaches such as scoreboards including several numbers or a composite index derived using sophisticated weighting techniques. In this paper we explain the approach of the recently released OECD Green Growth indicators for agriculture, built up from data on biophysical issues and complemented with other economic, environmental and social data in order to provide context for policies facilitating the transition to a low-carbon, natural resource-efficient agricultural sector. The paper then selects a few of these Green Growth indicators as a candidate set for the monitoring of the three pillars of climate-smart agriculture - building resilience in food systems; reducing and removing greenhouse gases and increasing agricultural productivity. These indicators could serve as a framework for monitoring progress towards the climate-smart agriculture goals endorsed at the UN Climate Summit of September 2014 and championed by the Global Alliance for Climate-Smart Agriculture.

Keywords: climate-smart agriculture; agri-environmental indicators; OECD green growth indicators for agriculture