

*Agricultural and Environmental Sustainability: Considerations for the Future*. Edited by M. S. Kang. Binghamton, NY, USA: Haworth Press (2007), pp. 224, US\$65.00 (paperback). ISBN 978-1-56022-171-5. doi:10.1017/S0014479708006479

When you pick up a new book with a title that includes the words Agricultural, Environmental and Sustainability, you ought to find content that will present novel evidence, stretch existing ideas, and develop critical insights for future actions and policies. This book, though, largely does little more than to fill in some gaps in existing paradigms. Nine chapters cover agroforestry, soils, whole systems integration, wheat improvement, rice-wheat systems, cowpea-cereal interactions and drought stresses in banana production. Some of the content is very good, but the mix is eclectic. Some chapters seem to be broad in scope; others are very place specific, and thus it is difficult to draw clear conclusions on agricultural and environmental sustainability. The papers arise from a 2005 symposium, and it is disappointing that most of the chapters in a 2007 book do not contain updates covering the intervening two years. As a result, some of them contain data only up to the 2000–2003 period, which already begins to make this book feel outdated in its publication year.

The final chapter stands out in terms of presenting novelty – by Francis, Elmore, Ikerd and Duffy. This discusses the greening of agriculture in the context of rapidly globalizing economies and the emergence of the troubling greenwash syndrome. They also address interesting questions: are small farms better for sustainability or not? What kinds of metrics are critical for encouraging a transition towards sustainability? Other notable chapters by Ramachandran Nair and Lal are helpful summaries of agroforestry and soils management, but readers familiar with these authors are unlikely to find anything especially new here.

This book is a welcome addition to the literature, but ultimately will leave the reader wishing for more novelty.

Jules Pretty OBE

*Farming with Nature. The Science and Practice of Ecoagriculture*. Edited by S. J. Scherr and J. A. McNeely. Washington and London: Island Press (2007), pp. 445, £22.95. ISBN 13:978-1-59726-128-9. doi:10.1017/S0014479708006480

The term ‘ecoagriculture’ is defined by the editors as referring to landscapes that achieve the joint objectives of sustainable agricultural production, biodiversity and ecosystem conservation, and rural livelihoods. The aim of this book is to describe the current science and practice of ecoagriculture, while acknowledging that the concept will inevitably evolve in response to economic, political and other changes.

The text consists of three parts: Agricultural Production in Ecoagriculture Landscapes; Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management; and Institutional Foundations for Ecoagriculture. The authors of the 22 chapters are established experts from a range of countries and organizations worldwide. Chapter titles include: Livestock Systems, Designing Agricultural Landscapes, Watershed Management, Tropical Agroforestry and Multistakeholder Partnerships. One chapter describes the interesting idea that conversion to perennial crops might serve to ameliorate the problems of erosion, nitrogen loss and pesticide contamination caused by annual grain production. Another chapter describes examples of the role of agricultural biodiversity in ensuring stability and productivity of agriculture while benefiting the environment and wild biodiversity.

The book is clearly written, definitions are given where required and the inclusion of case studies add interest and illumination to the text. The book comes across as authoritative, informative and practical. Many examples of best practice from a range of environments are cited. Overall, the book gives the reader sufficient information to understand the policies and practices required to promote the development of ‘ecoagriculture’.

Carol M. Duffus

*Organic Farming – An International History*. Edited by W. Lockertz. Wallingford, UK: CABI (2007), pp. 320, £75.00. ISBN-13: 978-0-85199-833-6. doi:10.1017/S0014479708006492

The book charts nearly a century of organic farming, starting in the 1920s with protests against the industrialization of farming and in favour of arable food production by methods that were not only environmentally friendly, but socially and economically sound. The key was the maintenance of soil fertility. A healthy soil meant healthy food – the philosophy of ‘you are what you eat’ was born. Although the 16 chapters