

2nd World Congress and Expo on

Recycling

July 25-27, 2016 Berlin, Germany



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Recycle nutrients today for a better tomorrow

Accelerated cycling of nutrients is principally due to three changes in the global food system: Increase in population, changes in diet towards more phosphorous (P) and nitrogen (N) intensive products, and industrialization of agriculture. Methodology nutrient footprint takes into account 1) the amount of nutrients taken into use as virgin or recycled nutrients and 2) the efficiency of these nutrients utilized in the particular production chain. At the same time, nutrient losses at each life cycle phase are identified. Hence, the nutrient footprint is an indicator, which combines the amount of captured nutrients, kg of N and P, for use in the production chain and the share of nutrients utilized % either in the primary product itself or in the entire production chain, accounting also for secondary products. The nutrient footprint methodology seems to have potential in assessing the nutrient balances of food chains as well other bio-based production chains. It offers information about the nutrient usage and utilization efficiency in a simple and comparable form. The definition of the hot spots of nutrient leakage of the entire food chain, in order to be able to close them, is essential to determine in transition towards sustainable nutrient economy and proper nutrient performance. The food chain can be remarkably improved with of the Nutrient Footprint-tool by improving the efficiency of nutrient use of the whole chain or the part of the chain. The results can be adapted as general view of nutrient management in communication with consumers and politicians.

Biography

Sirpa Kurppa is a specialist in the ecology of food production systems. She has wide-ranging science experience for more than 30 years, and has provided expert input into EU Rural Foresight studies and into work of the Committee for the Future of the Finnish Parliament, into the National Food Strategy and into the Strategy for Sustainable Consumption and Production. She attended preparing a proposal on green growth for the Finnish Parliament and preparing the Finnish strategy for bioeconomy. From 2013-2015, she was a member in the EU Bioeconomy Panel, and from 2014 a member of the National Nutrition Council.

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