

Interactive comment on “Soil: the great connector of our lives now and beyond COVID-19” by Rosa M. Poch et al.

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We thank Referee#1 for his/her comments and considerations. You are right: our manuscript does not contain new scientific information, since it was intended as a Forum article. According to the SOIL policy, it "should stimulate an open debate by presenting new ideas and views of soil as part of the larger Earth system. As such, they must strive to be a point of departure for future work. Purely speculative contributions are discouraged." The five strategies we propose are not new. But we disagree about the little merit since we give reasons for them being useful (even crucial, to our understanding) to increase the resilience of societies in front of pandemics. After reviewing several publications on the effects of COVID in different sectors (as agriculture, hydrology, economics, world trade, sociology...) the same arguments could be stated,

saying that there is nothing “scientifically” new (unless we are dealing with the virus and disease itself, which are indeed new), but analysed from a different viewpoint. We believe that the statements at the end of the manuscript can be used as guidelines for policy proposals to mitigate the effects of pandemics and global crises, stressing the central role soils should have. We are convinced that these “well-known” truths have to be restated under the scope of COVID-19, in the same way e.g. the IPCC is repeating publication after publication that GHG emissions have to be reduced, and they are not blamed for not being new. We also think that the possibility to publish this manuscript as Forum paper in an open access, comprehensive and transversal journal as SOIL will be an added value for the possibility to become a citable paper and also for the inputs of reviews and comments that will surely come from it. Another high point is the opportunity to bring new interdisciplinary research integrating urban development and agriculture sustainability. It is a common fact that many of the media that deal with translating scientific articles to the non-scientific public prefer to have as sources subjects that are published first in a journal. This is understandable, since it will carry the benefit of the peer review system, and thus insure the information as from a cited publication. In this aspect it is of relevance that journals also divulge such a message, especially considering this pandemic condition, which will lead to major changes on production of knowledge and investments in scientific research. Soil plays a major part in the process of changing agriculture models and although there are not new findings in this paper, it is a new approach and that is relevant to achieve a future where food production is sustainable. As mentioned by the reviewer, once it is published, it may be translated in many languages, with the collaboration of ITPS members, and in this way further divulge the ideas posted in this paper and the Journal as well. Thus, we believe that in some critical moments a science-oriented journal would also benefit from documents such as this one.

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Discussion paper

