G FACULTY OF BIOSCIENCE ENGINEERING

DEPARTMENT OF SOIL MANAGEMENT RESEARCH UNIT SOIL PHYSICS

Soil compaction: the invisible enemy.

Lessons from Europe

Ghent University, Department of Soil Management, Soil Physics Group www.soilmanagement.UGent.be/en/research/soilphysics





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Content

- Soil compaction: definition and concept
- Forms of soil compaction
- Relevance of soil compaction
- Susceptibility to soil compaction maps
- Causes of soil compaction
- Consequences of soil compaction
- Evaluation of soil compaction
- Measures against soil compaction
- Flemish policy on soil compaction
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Soil compaction: definition and concept
soil compression: when subjected to pressure \rightarrow soils tend to compress = tend to \uparrow bulk density
• soil consolidation: compression of a saturated soil by "squeezing

- soil consolidation: compression of a saturated soil by "squeezing out" water → mostly used in geotechnics
- soil compaction: densification of unsaturated soil by reduction of fractional air volume → used in geotechnics and in soil science, hydrology, agronomy or plant ecology

• geotechnical approach:

soil considered as a construction material (e.g., for roadbeds, embankments, foundation for various structures)

- → enhance strength + reduce permeability of soil layers
- \rightarrow soil compaction is a means to achieve this (cfr. Proctor test)



- soil science, hydrological, agronomical, ecological approach:
 - soil is medium in which seeds germinate and roots proliferate, and in which water (and gases) is transmitted
 - → soil compaction is undesirable consequence of mechanisation
 - → reduces the soils productivity, and capacity to store, transmit and alter water and solutes (except when puddling for preparing rice seedbed)

Soil Science Society of America:

"the process by which the soil grains are rearranged to decrease void space and bring them into closer contact with one another, thereby increasing the bulk density"



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- soil becomes compacted when applied pressure (e.g., by machinery) > precompression stress PCS (soil strength)
- PCS is measure for risk to soil compaction:

PCS $\uparrow \rightarrow$ susceptibility to compaction \downarrow

 depends primarily on clay, OM, structure (*sensitivity*) and on soil wetness (*vulnerability*):

pF \uparrow (dryer) \rightarrow PCS \uparrow

OM, structure $\uparrow \rightarrow$ PCS \uparrow

clay $\uparrow \rightarrow PCS \uparrow$ when soil is rather dry $\rightarrow PCS \downarrow$ when soil is rather wet

example of relation between PCS and clay content & soil wetness (pF) as applied in Terranimo®



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PCS typically determined with *oedometer* (uniaxial precompression test)





Casagrande - Oed67_Ring89.txt



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• dense crust



• dense topsoil



• dense tillage pan



• dense tillage pan



• dense subsoil



• naturally formed compacted subsurface layers (fragipan, ...)



Fragipan

mottled silt loam with pale grey soil-filled cracks; very dense



Soil threats according to EU Thematic Strategy on Soil Protection

Soil threat

erosion

decline in OM content

soil compaction

salinity

land slides

pollution

sealing

decline biodiversity



research on soil compaction \uparrow



Number of papers including the term '*soil compaction' in its <u>title</u> (not even <u>topic</u>) published in WoS journals (SCI-Expanded) per year (on 7 April 2014). Cornelis (2014; ESSC Newsletter)

particular attention to subsoil compaction (incl. formation of tillage pan)

- quasi permanent
- natural recovery is very difficult
- subsoiling leads to permanent damage of soil structure
 - + leaves the soil extra sensitive to compaction

Susceptibility to soil compaction maps

Susceptibility to soil compaction in Europe



Susceptibility to soil compaction maps

Susceptibility to *subsoil* compaction (30-60 cm) in Europe (based on PCS calculated with pedotransfer functies of Lebert & Horn, 1991, STILL)



Fig. 1. Calculated values of the precompression stress (kPa) at pF 1.8 and 2.5 for subsoils (30–60 cm) of Europe. Data are taken from the soil map of Europe (1:1,000,000) and the corresponding explanations. Classification of the precompression stress (kPa): <30, very low; 30–60, low; 60–90, medium; 90–120, high; 120–150, very high.

Horn et al. (2005)

Susceptibility to soil compaction maps

Susceptibility to *subsoil* compaction (>40 cm) in Flanders (based on PCS calculated with pedotransfer functies of Lebert & Horn, 1991, STILL) after conversion of PCS values to 4 susceptibility classes



cattle: density \uparrow



heavy machinery: soil tillage





heavy machinery: fertilizing



heavy machinery: harvesting



- reduced yield + environmental hazard
- ightarrow soil quality \downarrow
 - = capacity of soil to *perform* functions optimally
- according to EU Thematic Strategy on Soil Protection:
- biomass production
- storing, filtering and transforming of nutrients, chemicals and water
- hosting the biodiversity pool
- acting as a platform for most human activities
- providing raw materials
- acting as a carbon pool
- storing geological and archaeological heritage

and thus...

- mechanical resistance 1 (root proliferation)
- disturbed aeration
- disturbed hydrology

in particular:

- soil productivity \downarrow
- biodiversity \downarrow
- runoff + soil erosion \uparrow
- runoff and leaching of nutrients and agrochemicals \uparrow (water quality \downarrow)
- drought and flood risk \uparrow
- N mineralisation \downarrow
- greenhouse gas emission $\uparrow \downarrow$: N₂O \uparrow , CH₄ \uparrow , CO₂ \downarrow + NH₃ \uparrow







adapted from Ahmad et al. (2009, Field Crops Res.)

linked to reduced physical soil quality:

- penetration restistance \uparrow
- bulk density \uparrow (pore volume \downarrow)
- macropore volume \downarrow , structural pore volume \downarrow
- air capacity \downarrow
- air permeability \downarrow : connectivity \downarrow , tortuosity \uparrow
- water retention curve changes (in 'wet part')
- water permeability \downarrow : connectivity \downarrow , tortuosity \uparrow
- infiltration capacity \downarrow (+ hanging water table)
example: study in Finland on Vertic Endostagnic Cambisol (clay) compaction \rightarrow plots subjected to four passes of tractor + trailer



Fig. 8. Pores detected within the region of interest (90-mm diameter, 70-mm height) by computed tomography scans of 96-mm-diameter, 80-mmhigh soil cores collected from the 0.3- to 0.4-m depth of control (left) or compacted (right) soil in the Jokioinen field experiment. Cores are displayed in order of core number and relate to field blocks as follows (from top down): Blocks 4, 2, 1, and 3.

Schj∳nning et al. 2013, SSSAJ

example: study in Italy on Vertic Cambisol (clay) compaction \rightarrow plots subjected to 1 to 4 passes of tractor with tracks and tyres



Pagliai et al. 2003, STILL

example: study in Argentina on Typic Argiudoll (loam) en Entic Hapludoll (sandy loam) with resp. platy and blocky structure



FIG. 2. Hydraulic conductivity (*K*) versus water pressure head (*h*) depending on sampling direction for Site 1 with loam texture and platy structure (A) and Site 2 with sandy loam texture and blocky structure (B). Bars mean S.D. S, NS: significant, nonsignificant differences between sampling directions for *K*.

Lozano et al. 2013, Soil Sci

example: lab experiments (θ -h curve and K_s)



Bulk Density of Soils and Impact on Their Hydraulic Properties, Figure 2 Measured WRCs for a sandy loam soil at two bulk densities and the corresponding modeled curves following Assouline (2006a). The dashed lines correspond to the model of Brooks and Corey (1964) and the solid lines to the model of Assouline et al. (1998).



Bulk Density of Soils and Impact on Their Hydraulic Properties, Figure 3 Measured and modeled relative decrease in K_s versus the relative increase in ρ_b for various soil types (the *thin solid line* corresponds to Kozeny–Carman expression and the *bold solid line*, to the model of Assouline (2006b)).

Assouline, 2011

example: study in Poland on Mollic Fluvisol (sandy loam) compaction \rightarrow plots subjected to several passes of tractor



Hg. 1. The measured data and soil water retention curves based on van Genuchten equation for the investigated soil under different treatments at two soil layers, 0–10 and 10-20 cm. P0, P2, P4, P6 – compaction levels; N0, N80, N160 – nitrogen fertilization rates. Vertical bars represent standard deviations. Głab 2014, STILL

example: lab experiments (K-h)



Fig. 3. Unsaturated hydraulic conductivity determined by the hot-air method as affected by soil compaction (C0, 0%; C1, 10%; and C2, 20%) of soil from the Heyang (left panel) and Mihzi (right panel) sites at 0-5 cm (upper) and 10-15 cm (lower) soil depths.

Zhang et al. 2006, STILL

indictators for soil compaction according to ENVASSO (ENVironmental ASsessment of Soil for mOnitoring) with threshold (critical) values (Huber et al., 2008)

penetration resistance

 $PR \ge 2 MPa$

• bulk density

 $\begin{array}{ll} \text{BD} \geq 1.75 - 0.009 \ \text{clay} \ (\text{Mg m}^{-3}) & \text{for clay} > 17.5\% \\ \text{BD} \geq 1.60 \ (\text{Mg m}^{-3}) & \text{for clay} \leq 17.5\% \end{array}$

- air capacity (POR θ_{-5kPa}) AC $\leq 0.10 \text{ (m}^3 \text{ m}^{-3}$)
- saturated hydraulic conductivity (permeability) $K_s \le 10 \text{ cm } d^{-1}$

Visual Evaluation of Soil Structure (Guimarães et al. 2011)

Structure quality	Size and appearance of aggregates	Visible porosity and Roots	Appearance after break-up: various soils	Appearance after break-up: same soil different tillage	Distinguishing feature	Appearance and description of natural or reduced fragment of ~ 1.5 cm diameter	
Sq1 Friable Aggregates readily crumble with fingers	Mostly < 6 mm after crumbling	Highly porous Roots throughout the soil			Fine aggregates	1 cm	The action of breaking the block is enough to reveal them. Large aggregates are composed of smaller ones, held by roots.
Sq2 Intact Aggregates easy to break with one hand	A mixture of porous, rounded aggregates from 2 mm –7 cm. No clods present	Most aggregates are porous Roots throughout the soil			High aggregate porosity	1 cm	Aggregates when obtained are rounded, very fragile, crumble very easily and are highly porous.
Sq3 Firm Most aggregates break with one hand	A mixture of porous aggregates from 2 mm –10 cm; less than 30% are <1 cm. Some angular, non- porous aggregates (clods) may be present	Macropores and cracks present. Porosity and roots both within aggregates.			Low aggregate porosity		Aggregate fragments are fairly easy to obtain. They have few visible pores and are rounded. Roots usually grow through the aggregates.
Sq4 Compact Requires considerable effort to break aggregates with one hand	Mostly large > 10 cm and sub-angular non-porous; horizontal/platy also possible; less than 30% are <7 cm	Fewmacropores and cracks All roots are clustered in macropores and around aggregates			Distinct macropores		Aggregate fragments are easy to obtain when soil is wet, in cube shapes which are very sharp- edged and show cracks internally.
Sq5 Very compact Difficult to break up	Mostly large > 10 cm, very few < 7 cm, angular and non- porous	Very low porosity. Macropores may be present. May contain anaerobic zones. Few roots, if any, and restricted to cracks			Grey-blue colour		Aggregate fragments are easy to obtain when soil is wet, although considerable force may be needed. No pores or cracks are visible usually.

Electromagnetic Induction EMI



Electric Resistivity Tomography ERT



 ΔV



Séger et al. 2010

X-ray Computed Tomography





Luo et al. 2007, SSSAJ

example: Flanders, Belgium

→ study on 30 agricultural fields (commissioned by Flemish Government with WUR and VITO)

all textural classes represented



• penetration resistance



• penetration resistance



• hydrophysical soil properties



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Evaluation of soil compaction

- hydrophysical soil properties
 - permeability $K_s \rightarrow falling water head KSAT$



hydrophysical soil properties

permeability $K_s \rightarrow falling water head KSAT^{\mathbb{R}}$



- hydrophysical soil properties
 - $\theta\text{-}h$ and K-h curves \rightarrow evaporation method HYPROP $\ensuremath{\mathbb{R}}$
 - + bulk density BD, air capacity LC



hydrophysical soil properties

θ -h and K-h curves \rightarrow evaporation method HYPROP®



hydrophysical soil properties

θ -h and K-h curves \rightarrow evaporation method HYPROP®



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penetration resistance in tillage pan



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• bulk density in tillage pan





Figure 1 D of topsoil horizons in function of the classes on the Belgian soil texture triangle (Van Hove, 1969).

• permeability in tillage pan



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• permeability in tillage pan







• overview headland all fields, 4 indicators

Textuur- klasse bodem- kaart	Code	Textuurklasse CSUB ²	Iw (MPa)	BD (kg/m ³)	Lc (m³/m3)	K _{s,geom} (cm/d)
А	h1	Zandleem	3.5	1582.3	0.020	6.8
А	h2	Zandleem	5.1	1422.2	0.043	2.9
А	h3	Zandleem	6.0	1514.6	0.063	7.2
А	ref	Zandleem	2.8	1683.0	0.012	8.1
А	zh1	Zandleem	5.1	1494.3	0.110	14.7
E	h1	Zandleem	6.1	1642.5	0.077	92.2
E	h2	Zware Klei	1.8	1307.2	0.000	112.9
E	ref	Zandleem	3.7	1587.3	0.049	44.7
E	zh1	Zandleem	4.3	1520.8	0.019	3.9
L	1	Zandleem	4.5	1587.4	0.044	1.5
L	ml1	Zandleem	5.4	1448.4	0.075	51.9
L	ml2	Zandleem	5.0	1688.1	0.000	7.1
L	ml3	Zandleem	4.7	1406.9	0.015	41.8
L	ref	Leem	3.5	1454.7	0.059	5.1
Р	1	Lemig Zand	5.1	1396.7	0.083	35.5
Р	12	Zandleem	4.6	1432.0	0.098	12.5
Р	13	Lemig Zand	4.6	1548.7	0.047	9.9
Р	14	Zandleem	4.8	1495.0	0.066	91.3
Р	ref	Zandleem	4.5	1612.2	0.035	12.6
s	h1	Lemig Zand	6.3	1524.0	0.087	40.2
s	1	Lemig Zand	5.6	1553.6	0.055	22.4
s	ref	Zand	7.2	1539.2	0.099	88.4
s	zh1	Zand	3.9	1463.0	0.113	55.0
Z	h1	Zand	3.7	1552.4	0.129	21.1
Z	h2	Zand	4.0	1300.7	0.105	158.3
Z	ref	Zand	6.1	1626.0	0.083	24.5

van der Bolt et al. 2016

- monitoring of soil-water content and groundwater table
- Decagon 10HS®-sensors at 3 depths + EM50-logger
 + Diver® at 2 m
- to calibrate soil-hydrological model (Hydrus and SWAP)



• water ponding now (2015-2016) and in future IPCC (2100-2101)



- remediation:
 - mechanic loosening (ploughing, decompacting, subsoiling, ...
 + gypsum, OM)









- remediation:
 - mechanic loosening (ploughing, decompacting, subsoiling, ...
 + gypsum, OM)
 - ... but, make soil more susceptible to compaction
 - + damage to soil structure: smearing effect



- remediation:
 - biologic: earthworms, plant roots,
 - endotrofic vesicular-arbuscular (VA) mycorrhiza fungi

Recolonisation of a compacted zone by earth worms



non-compacted

1 month after compaction 8 months after compaction 24 months after compaction

Capowiez et al., 2008



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deep-rooting crops (Sorghum)



- prevention:
 - increase soil strength (sustainable soil management conservation tillage, strip till)





- prevention:
 - increase soil strength (sustainable soil management conservation tillage, strip till/drill)





- prevention:
 - controlled traffic

permanent traffic lanes





circulation at harvesting



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- prevention:
 - on-land ploughing

conventional ploughing


- prevention:
 - timing activities (in function of soil wetness)

soil wetness



©VLM

- prevention:
 - wheel load and inflation pressure



inflation pressure tyres







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wheel load

- prevention:
 - wheel load and inflation pressure

automated tire inflation systems



Improved Flexion IF tyres





©Firestone

ECOLOGY

- prevention:
 - type and width of tyres/tracks



- prevention:
 - lighter vehicles: unmanned GPS-based tractors



Welcome to Terranimo[®] International

Terranimo[®] is a model for prediction of the risk of soil compaction due to agricultural field traffic

Start Terranimo[®] by clicking one of the buttons to the right

The different versions provide countryspecific soil types



Web site provided by Aarhus University, Faculty of Science and Technology, Department of Agroecology, Photo: H.C. Thomsen. Report technical problems to webmaster: Poul Lassen.







Flemish policy on soil compaction

- VLIF financial support to purchase improved flexion tyres and automated tire inflation systems
- awareness raising (field demonstration days, agricultural fairs, financial support to awareness-raising projects, ...)
- best practice guide for farmers and advisers/extensionists (2017)

5 from 2002-2015 \rightarrow *forestry*

7 from 1989-1998 \rightarrow agriculture – all by <u>R.G. Barber</u> (Santa Cruz)

11.	PERSISTENCE OF LOOSENED HORIZONS AND SOYBEAN YIELD INCREASES IN BOLIVIA
	B): BARBER, RG SOIL SCIENCE SOCIETY OF AMERICA JOURNAL Volume: 58 Issue: 3 Pages: 943-950 Published: MAY-JUN 1994
	SFX View Abstract
12.	COMPACTION STATUS AND COMPACTION SUSCEPTIBILITY OF ALLUVIAL SOILS IN SANTA-CRUZ
	By BARBER, RG; HERRERA, C; DIAZ, O SOL& TILLAGE RESEARCH Volume: 15 Issue: 1-2 Pages: 153-167 Published: DEC 1989
	S ST V Full Text from Publisher

Papers including the term '*soil compaction' and 'Bolivia' in topic, published in WoS journals (SCI-Expanded) per year (on 13 February 2017)

1.	Environmental heterogeneity and dispersal processes influence post-logging seedling establishment in a Chiquitano dry tropical forest
	By: Corria-Ainsile, Robin; Camarero, J. Julio; Toledo, Marisol FOREST ECOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT Volume: 349 Pages: 122-133 Published: AUG 1 2015
	SFX Full Text from Publisher View Abstract
2.	Soil Quality Impacts of Current South American Agricultural Practices
	By: Wingeyer, Ana B.; Amado, Telmo J. C.; Perez-Bidegain, Mario, et al. Conference: Sustainable Asia Conference 2014 Location: Nanchang, PEOPLES R CHINA Date: APR 23-25, 2014 SUSTAINABILITY Volume: 7 Issue: 2 Pages: 2213-2242 Published: FEB 2015
	SFX 8 Full Text from Publisher View Abstract
3.	Timber tree regeneration along abandoned logging roads in a tropical Bolivian forest
	By: Nabe-Nielsen, Jacob; Severiche, Willy; Fredericksen, Todd; et al. NEW FORESTS: Volume: 34 Issue: 1 Pages: 31-40 Published: JUL 2007
	SFX View Abstract
4	Regeneration of timber trees in a logged tropical forest in North Bolivia
	By: van Rheenen, HMPJB; Boot, RGA; Werger, MJA; et al. FOREST ECOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT Volume: 200 Issue: 1-3 Pages: 39-48 Published: OCT 25 2004
	SFX Full Text from Publisher View Abstract
5.	Effect of skidder disturbance on commercial tree regeneration in logging gaps in a Bolivian tropical forest
	By: Fredericken, TS: Parlona, W FOREST ECOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT Volume: 171 Issue: 3 Pages: 223-230 Article Number: Pil S0375-1127(01)00767-3 Published: NOV 15 2002
	SFX Full Text from Publisher View Abstract
6.	Linking with agricultural input suppliers for technology transfer: The adoption of vertical tillage in Bolivia
	By: Thiele, G; Barber, R JOURNAL OF SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION Volume: 53 Issue: 1 Pages: 51-56 Published: 1998
	SFX View Abstract
7.	Effects of conservation and conventional tillage systems after land clearing on soil propertie and crop yield in Santa Cruz, Bolivia
	By: Barber, RG; Orellana, M; Navarro, F; et al. SOIL & TILLAGE RESEARCH Volume: 38 Issue: 1-2 Pages: 133-152 Published: AUG 1996
	STX Full Text from Publisher View Abstract
8.	SOIL DEGRADATION IN THE TROPICAL LOWLANDS OF SANTA-CRUZ, EASTERN BOLIVIA
	B): BARBER, RG LAND DEGRADATION AND REHABILITATION Volume: 6 Issue: 2 Pages: 95-107 Published: JUN 1995
	SFX View Abstract
9.	EFFECTS OF BULLDOZER AND CHAIN CLEARING ON SOIL PROPERTIES AND CROP YIELDS
	B): BARBER, RG; ROMERO, D SOIL SCIENCE SOCIETY OF AMERICA JOURNAL Volume: 58 Issue: 6 Pages: 1768-1775 Published: NOV-DEC 1994
	SFX View Abstract
10.	EVALUATION OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF 14 COVER CROPS USED IN A SOIL REHABILITATION TRIAL
	By: BARBER, RG; NAVARRO, F LAND DEGRADATION AND REHABILITATION Volume: 5 Issue: 3 Pages: 201-214 Published: OCT 1994
	9 S-FX View Abstract



Chuquisaca...



Chuquisaca...



Chuquisaca...



Chuquisaca...



Yucca



Chuquisaca...

... compaction might be positive?











Temesgen et al. (2012)

