

Interactive comment on “Impacts of sewage irrigation on soil properties of farmland in China: A review” by Qiangkun Li et al.

Anonymous Referee #1

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This paper aims to present a review of the literature on irrigation with sewage water in China. Unfortunately it does so mostly in a descriptive, qualitative mode. Most of the Chinese literature stems from grey sources or unknown journals with hardly any circulation. I suspect much of it is in Chinese, but the authors do not indicate if this is the case in the reference list. The discussion of the references is so superficial and incoherent that hardly any useful information is transferred to the reader, who is unable to access many of the cited sources if s/he is not based in China.

The purpose of the paper appears to be to convince the Chinese government to adopt much more stringent regulations to control irrigation with waste water. Apparently, untreated or poorly treated waste water from various sources has been used, including waste water from heavy industry and the petroleum industry. Unsurprisingly, this has

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led to soil and groundwater pollution with hydrocarbons, heavy metals, and other compounds.

Dramatic as this is, scientifically this is not new or surprising. Other countries have developed wastewater irrigation practices much further and this progress is well documented in easily accessible journals. This paper adds no new knowledge to the available literature on the subject. Furthermore, the heavy focus on China leads to considerable bias in the quoted literature. Nationality of the authors is a poor criterion to select which papers to include in a review, further limiting the value of the paper for the international readership of SE.

In the annotated pdf I indicated which were poorly organized or otherwise unclear. On a few occasions I corrected the English, but the text really should be completely rewritten by an English editor.

Please also note the supplement to this comment:

<https://www.solid-earth-discuss.net/se-2017-116/se-2017-116-RC1-supplement.pdf>

Interactive comment on Solid Earth Discuss., <https://doi.org/10.5194/se-2017-116>, 2017.

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