

# **Plant nutrition in the fight against the persistent global problem of Hidden Hunger**

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Hidden hunger (also known as micronutrient deficiencies) remains highly prevalent worldwide, affecting over 2 billion people, with children and women at particular risk and resulting in serious health complications such as impairments in immune system and brain function. The most common mineral micronutrient deficiencies occurring in human populations include zinc, iron, iodine and selenium. Interestingly, the Hidden Hunger problem is still persisting in human populations and even growing globally, despite a huge number of national and international projects, international aid programs and diverse educational and training programs aiming to address this problem over the past 40<sup>th</sup> to 50<sup>th</sup> years. Agricultural and food policies implemented so far have simply not succeeded in addressing the Hidden Hunger problem, despite using a large amount of funds and resources. None of these interventions have included fertilizer-based solutions (i.e., application of micronutrient containing fertilizers). The root source of the problem is soil which, however, receives no or very little attention by the policy and decision makers. Now, it is time to consider and integrate the fertilizer approach into ongoing regional and national human nutritional programs and policies to address the problem of Hidden Hunger. This presentation will focus on this global problem and provide a number of examples from different countries, demonstrating effective enrichment of food crops with micronutrients by using a fertilizer strategy.

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