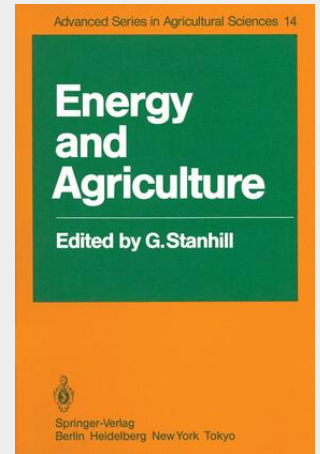


Stanhill

Energy and Agriculture

Energy and agriculture are both extremely broad subjects and their interactions - the subject of this book - cover almost the full spectrum of the agricultural sciences. Yet the subject is a relatively new one whose importance first received widespread recognition barely a decade ago, following the dramatic increase in oil prices during 1973. The impact of this increase was such as to promote a world-wide debate on the future direction that agriculture should take. This debate was, and is, of particular concern in countries where agriculture plays a leading role in economic and social development. During the last half century many national agricultural systems have been transformed from almost closed, self-sufficient systems with few locally produced inputs geared to satisfy local requirements, to intensive, open systems, utilizing large quantities of energy-rich inputs such as fossil fuel for manufactured agro-chemicals, water distribution and imported animal feedstuffs to produce a range of sophisticated products, often for export, which in turn require many energy-rich inputs for their marketing. This industrialization of agriculture has proved to be very successful in many respects and indeed was accepted as a general model for agricultural development allowing increased productivity and efficiency per unit land, labor and water, even in areas with limited natural resources.

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Lieferfrist: bis zu 10 Tage

Artikelnummer: 9783642697869

Medium: Buch

ISBN: 978-3-642-69786-9

Verlag: Springer

Erscheinungstermin: 11.12.2012

Sprache(n): Englisch

Auflage: Softcover Nachdruck of the original 1. Auflage 1984

Serie: Advanced Series in Agricultural Sciences

Produktform: Kartoniert

Gewicht: 375 g

Seiten: 194

Format (B x H): 170 x 244 mm

