Contents

Contents ..... **i**
List of Figures ..... **iv**
List of Tables ..... **v**
Lists of Abbreviations and Symbols ..... **vii**

I Introduction **1**
1.1. Problem Analysis **1**
1.1.1. Agroecosystem Sustainability: a Nutrient Balance Perspective 1
1.1.2. Rationale for the Study 3
1.2. Objectives of the Study **4**
1.3. Organization of the Thesis **4**

II Assessment of Soil Nutrient Depletion on Smallholders' Mixed Farming Systems in Ethiopia Using Partial versus Full Balance **6**
2.1. Introduction **6**
2.2. Materials and Methods **7**
2.2.1. The Study Region 7
2.2.2. Quantification of Nutrient Fluxes 9
2.3. Results and Discussion **15**
2.3.1. Nutrient Inputs 15
2.3.2 Nutrient Outputs 21
2.3.3. Partial Nutrient Balances 26
2.3.4. Full Nutrient Balances 29
2.3.5. Effects of Cropping Systems on Nutrient Depletion Determinants 33
2.4. Conclusions **35**

III Soil Nutrient Balance for Different Cropping Systems in Oromiya (Ethiopia) to Estimate Scale of Nutrient Enrichment and Depletion **37**
3.1. Introduction **37**
3.2. Materials and Methods **38**
3.2.1. The Study Region 38

3.2.2. Nutrient Fluxes and Data Acquisition Strategies 39

3.3. Results and Discussion **40**

3.3.1. Nutrient Fluxes by Cropping Systems 40

3.3.2. Nutrient Fluxes at Regional and Zonal Scales 44

3.3.3. Role of Different Output Fluxes in Nutrient Depletion 46

3.4. Conclusions **47**

IV Smallholders' Soil Nutrient Management in the Central Highlands of Ethiopia: Examining Effects of Spatial Nutrient Gradients and Farmers' Wealth Status 49

4.1. Introduction **49**

4.2. Materials and Methods **50**

4.2.1. Study Areas 50

4.2.2. Household Survey 53

4.2.3. Land Use Mapping and Soil Sampling 53

4.2.4. Statistical Analysis 54

4.2.5. Nutrient Balances 54

4.3. Results **56**

4.3.1. Soil Nutrient Gradients and Associated Management 56

4.3.2. Organic and Inorganic Inputs and Relation to Wealth Status 62

4.3.3. Nutrient Balances, Stocks and Flux Rates 65

4.4. Discussion **68**

4.4.1. Soil Nutrient Management in Relation to Soil Fertility and Income 68

4.4.2. Nutrient Balances and Agroecosystem Sustainability 70

V Soil Nutrient Flow and Balance at Field and Farm Scales: a Case Study in the Central Highlands of Ethiopia 74

5.1. Introduction **74**

5.2. Materials and Methods **75**

5.2.1. Study Areas and Farm Selection 75

5.2.2. Perception and Quantification of Nutrient Fluxes 79

5.3. Results **80**

5.3.1. Access to Livestock, Land and Labor 80

5.3.2. Location of Case Study Fields and Implications for Nutrient Management 82

5.3.3. Fields and Farm Level Nutrient fluxes 83
5.3.4. Partial and Full Nutrient Balances by Crop, Landscape Position and Farm 86

5.4. Discussion **89**
5.4.1. Influence of Wealth on Nutrient Fluxes 89
5.4.2. Influence of Field Location and Crop Choice on Nutrient Fluxes 90
5.4.3. Soil Nutrient Balances by Land Use and Farms 92
5.4.4. Feedback of the Present Results to Explain Balances at Higher Scales 93

VI Conclusions **95**
VII Summary **97**
VIII Zusammenfassung **101**
IX References **106**
X Appendices **116**
Acknowledgements **122**