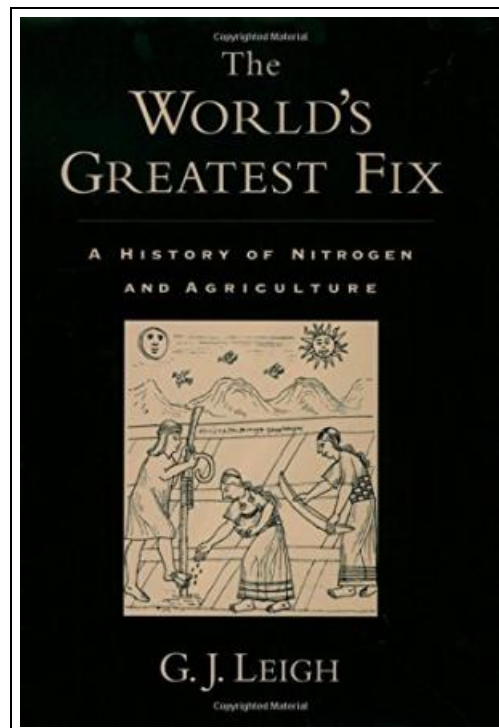


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Oxford University Press Inc, United States, 2004. Hardback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book ***** Print on Demand *****. The World s Greatest Fix: A History of Nitrogen and Agriculture tells the story of how humans have used their ingenuity throughout history to maintain soil fertility, and to avoid famine through productive agriculture. It starts with a layman s guide to the relevant chemistry of nitrogen and shows how the development of towns and fixed settlements meant that methods had to be found to maintain the fertility of fields exploited year after year. The way this was done, in purely empirical fashion, is described for the Chinese, the Incas, the Mayas, and the Romans. Author G. J. Leigh then examines the development of agriculture in England, including the use of field rotations. The gradual evolution of more sophisticated methods of land management is covered, emphasizing the use of fertilizers, the early development of chemistry with the realization of the modern concepts of elements and the contributions of plants and animals, and the establishment of agricultural science by Davy and Von Liebig. Leigh explains how we have arrived at our current understanding of biological nitrogen fixation through the efforts of generations of dedicated farmers and researchers. Later chapters deal with the birth of the nitrogen fixation industry and the political and economic consequences of it in Europe (First World War) and South America (guano and nitrate). The World s Greatest Fix shows how industrial fixation has developed from a laboratory process newly discovered at the beginning of the twentieth century into the impressive and sophisticated procedure in use today. Finally, the value of industrial nitrate to help feed the current world population and the environmental consequences of nitrate pollution in waters is discussed.



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