



Cross-Institute Programme for Sustainable Soil Function SoilCIP

2009 Christmas and New Year Newsletter



SoilCIP review / Next ISPG

We made good progress in agreeing the next round of ISPGs at the HoD/HoC meeting at 4th December. There will be a Soil-Plant Interactions ISPG: the draft title agreed was 'Sustainable Soil and Land Management'. The other ISPGs are likely to be: 'Biotic Stress Reduction' (i.e. Crop Protection), to be led by John Lucas and Lin Field, with discussions to be had about future leadership; 'Food Production and Quality' to be written and led by Johnathan Napier; 'Climate Change Impacts and Intervention' to be written and led by Angela Karp. At the moment, no bioinformatics programme is planned. Bioinformatics and research statistics and mathematics will be embedded in the other ISPGs. Les and I will write our ISPG; its leadership is up for grabs as I shall be 60 when it starts in 2012. My plan for the SoilCIP and its successor has always been that someone would take over after Phase I.

Peter Shewry suggests that we expect the current level of funding to continue, i.e. a decline in real terms, but that we should bid for more. The total 'core' institute income from BBSRC will consist of:

- The ISPGs (no Director's discretion to *vire* between ISPGs). These will probably comprise about 70-80% of the 'core' income.
- National Capability (NC) such as the LTEs, Insect Survey, Farm Platform, ECN. This should be a maximum 10% of 'core' income. We must demonstrate availability and use by the UK and international community.
- Knowledge Exchange and Commercialisation comprising 5-10% of 'core' income.
- An Institute Development Grant comprising 10% of 'core' income. This is the Director's discretionary budget for new ideas, recruitment, etc.

Writers/leaders are now looking at their ISPGs to decide what we can afford, linked to what we do well and BBSRC priorities (see below). Key dates for us in this process are the Farm Platform workshop at Swindon on 18th and 19th January and then the Board visit to NW in the week beginning 8th February. We need to have a clear view on what we want to do within the ISPG ready for another, more detailed, planning round at the Science Strategy Forum at the end of March.



BBSRC Strategic Plan 2010-15

At a recent BBSRC-RASE meeting at Rothamsted, Paul Burrows from SO presented an outline of the new BBSRC Strategic Plan to be launched 'in the New Year'. It has 3 research priorities: 'Food Security', 'Bioenergy and Industrial Biotechnology', and 'Basic Bioscience Underpinning Health'. Most soils research would appear to sit within 'Food Security', Strategic Research Priority 1. This section is likely to include priority areas such as enhancing yield and quality, generating crops adapted to future environments, essential functions of soils, and minimising inputs.

Stable Isotope meetings

Roland Bol would like to draw our attention to the following meetings to be held in April 2010 at the University of Exeter, UK.

1. BMSS Stable Isotope Special Interest Group (BMSS ISO-SIG) - 27th/28th April 2010
2. Stable Isotope Mass Spectrometry Users Group (SIMSUG) - 28th/30th April 2010

The meetings will run concurrently (28th/29th April 2010) with the management committee (MC) meeting of the COST Action ES0806 on Stable Isotopes in Biospheric-Atmospheric-Earth System Research (SIBAE). Further details, including registration, programme outline and abstract submission, will be given in the 2nd announcement in mid-January.

More information from Roland.

International workshop on System Innovations, Knowledge Regimes, and Design Practices towards Sustainable Agriculture

Boelie Elzen of the Cluster System Innovation, Wageningen UR Livestock Research, has asked us to note that, in June 2010, they will organise an ***“International workshop on System Innovations, Knowledge Regimes, and Design Practices towards Sustainable Agriculture”***. The workshop will be held in the Netherlands and is organised by an international scientific committee from the Netherlands and France.

The workshop will include:

- Intensive interactions among a limited number of participants (30-35), mostly researchers but also some policy-makers and representative of cooperative and professional networks.
- Participation is by invitation only on the basis of submitted abstracts (for researchers) or known expertise.
- All papers have to be written and will be distributed prior to the meeting.
- The meeting consists of two kinds of sessions: 1) paper sessions focussing on a theme; 2) 'harvesting' sessions without a paper submission. The latter sessions



aim at teasing out lessons for governance and to define a further research agenda.

- The workshop will be held from 16-18 June 2010. Participants are expected to arrive on the 15th.
- Local costs (hotel, subsistence) will be borne by the organisers. Funding applications for travel are pending. Check website for progress.

Further information and the call for abstracts can be found at:

<http://www.duurzameveehouderij.wur.nl/UK/SI-Agro-Workshop/>

E-mail: SI-Agro-Workshop@wur.nl

BBSRC Genome Analysis Centre has a “Capacity and Capability Challenge (CCC)” programme

Graham King has e-mailed HoDs to say: that the BBSRC Genome Analysis Centre has a “Capacity and Capability Challenge (CCC)” programme. This offers UK researchers the opportunity to engage with the Centre’s new sequencing and bioinformatics facilities through its early access research programme. **Commencing January 2010 and running for 12-18 months**, the CCC will deliver a series of innovative projects addressing not only biological research problems but also technical challenges to sequencing and associated informatics.

Collaborative proposals involving academic and industrial partners are welcome under the CCC, as are links to established sequencing and bioinformatics centres worldwide. Sequencing funded by existing BBSRC research grants can also be directed through the programme. Details at: <http://www.tgac.bbsrc.ac.uk/ccc/index.html>

The first deadline for proposals is Feb 20th

New edition of Pedometron published

It has exciting and latest articles on every aspect of Pedometrics: The Richard Webster Medal, PM 2009 report from Beijing, Soil texture wizard, Incorporating soil aging in DSM, The Hilbert-Huang Transform, Pedometrics 2011, DSM in Ireland, Soil Carbon sequestration, Report from Geomorphometry 2009, Soil Bibliometrics: NIR and Soil Science. Profiles: Sabine Grunwald & Anthony Young. Pedomathemagica to solve.

<http://www.pedometrics.org/pedometron/pedometron28.pdf>



The British Society of Soil Science
Annual Spring Meeting
Jointly organised with the South East Soil
Discussion Group (SEESOIL)

Land Remediation and Reclamation: Approaches, Applications and Challenges

Reading University, Palmer Building
7th - 9th April 2010

Register online from January at : <http://www.soils.org.uk/bsssConfs.htm>



Click [here](#) for the on-line version of this Alert



IUSS Alert 56 (December 2009)

Information for and from the global soil science community

New IUSS Bulletin



IUSS Bulletin 115 is now available on the website. In this Bulletin two articles (Soil science gains voice in the US Government by Karl Glasener, and Chemical Contaminants as a factor of soil-subsurface metagenesis by B. Yaron, I. Dror and B. Berkowitz). The five questions to a soil scientist are answered by: Alex McBratney, Stephen Nortcliff and Juan Ibanez whereas Christian Walter, Anthony Young and Alain Ruellan discuss their favourite books. Further in this

Bulletin several obituaries, reports of meetings and conferences, and a list of new publications.

Ask a soil scientist



The Soil Science Society of America developed a “Ask a Soil Scientist” program. If you have any question on soils, soil science, and careers in soil science, this is the place to get answers. And, teachers, if you’d like to arrange for a soil scientist to visit your classroom, this is the place to make a request. Your question(s) will be sent to a Soil Science Society of America member, in your region. As our members are volunteers with this program, please allow 24-48 hours for a response. www.soils.org/lessons/ask

EGU Session

Rainfall simulation as a tool for soil erosion and soil hydrology studies. Convener: Artemi Cerdà, co-Conveners: Peter Fiener , Xinping Wang , Rob Loch , Lee MacDonald , Fred Pierson, EGU 2010. Rainfall simulators are being used since the 30’s by scientists and technicians to study the soil erosion and soil hydrology. They were and they are one of the most used and most successful tools for Agronomist, Hydrologist, Geomorphologist, and others related disciplines. They move from simple drop-formers and nozzle to sophisticated apparatus, from small to large, and from mechanical to electronic devices. Rainfall simulators speed up the research as they allowed repeated and multiple measurements. They give opportunities to a more controlled and more accurate measurements, and they are plenty of advantages. However, when mismanagement and misunderstanding take place rainfall simulators can result in disadvantages and waste on time and money. The session on “Rainfall simulation



as a tool for soil erosion and soil hydrology studies” will join researchers that used simulated rainfall experiments as a main tool to investigate soil erosion and soil hydrology. A special attention will be paid to the rainfall simulators design, construction and use, the experimental design and the measurement of the rainfall characteristics. Research on soil erosion and soil hydrology by means of rainfall simulators (from drop former to large plot rainfall simulators) will be shown.
<http://meetingorganizer.copernicus.org/EGU2010/session/2493>

I aim to be on leave from 21st December until 1st January, although I might pop in on 21st to 23rd depending on what needs doing at work and at home. With Season’s Greetings – have a good holiday!

Keith Goulding, 18th December 2009