

# Cross-Institute Programme for Sustainable Soil Function

## SoilCIP

Newsletter for June 2006



### New grants

The CIP was awarded two new grants by BBSRC's Agri-Food Committee in its latest round. Murray Lark, Sue Welham and I have been awarded a grant 'Mapping complex biological processes across the landscape: the problem of non-stationarity'; Nigel Bird, David Scholefield, Iain Young at Abertay and Peter Mathews of Plymouth University have been awarded a grant to study 'Understanding Soil Quality and Resilience: Effects of Perturbations and Natural Variations on Nitrous Oxide Emission, Water Retention and Structure'. Both relate to nitrous oxide emissions and address the problem of spatial variation at different scales.

### Doctoral Training Award (DTA)

Four project proposals were received and all have been advertised in the Rothamsted and IGER websites and circulated to contacts:

<http://www.rothamsted.bbsrc.ac.uk/careers/vacancies/Studentships.html>

and

[http://www.iger.bbsrc.ac.uk/Research/Departments/SEES/Teams/SoilCIP/Welc  
ome.htm](http://www.iger.bbsrc.ac.uk/Research/Departments/SEES/Teams/SoilCIP/Welc%20me.htm)

If you hear of a good student looking to do a PhD, please let me know.

### University of Reading

I spent a very profitable day at the University of Reading on 6<sup>th</sup> June, speaking to Steven Nortcliff, Chris Collins and Sam Baxter. Chris is visiting Rothamsted shortly to discuss a possible collaboration with Saran Sohi and David Powlson on soil organic matter. Other Reading staff will visit Rothamsted in the autumn.

### University of Aberdeen

Liz Baggs visited Rothamsted on 26<sup>th</sup> June to discuss a collaborative grant proposal on carbon and nitrogen flows in bioenergy crops.

## **Review paper on soil science terminology**

At the CIP Retreat we discussed the possibility of writing a review of terminology in soil science. Sarah Kemmitt has had some thoughts as to what is needed but does not feel able to write the review on her own. She would be happy to coordinate it and I could put together an outline of sub-headings for a review on terms like resilience/resistance/diversity/function and circulate it and ask people to take ownership of sections. If you are interested in participating in such a review (Roland is the only other person to express an interest) then please contact Sarah.

## **IGER Open Day**

For the benefit of Rothamsted SoilCIP staff, I had a great time at North Wyke's Open Day on 29<sup>th</sup> June, 'Towards a better farming environment', celebrating 25 years of science for agriculture and the environment at IGER North Wyke. The weather was hot and sunny, the field trips and exhibits interesting, and the visitors clearly interested in and committed to North Wyke.

On a slightly sadder note, many of us also enjoyed a pleasant evening on the day after, sharing Steve Jarvis' retirement celebrations. Steve spent 36 years at GRI, AGRI and IGER, the last 6 years as Head of North Wyke. He was also deeply involved with Andy Whitmore and me in setting up SoilCIP. We all wish Steve well in his retirement.

The musical skills displayed at North Wyke that evening were most impressive. We should consider a SoilCIP+friends garden party sometime – perhaps next summer – at either Rothamsted Manor or North Wyke when we can enjoy the full range of SoilCIP musical talent. Let me have your views.

Please let me have any interesting items for the newsletter.

Keith Goulding, 5 July 2006