

Cross-Institute Programme for Sustainable Soil Function

SoilCIP

Newsletter for March 2010



UK-Brazil Soil Quality Workshop

A number of SoilCIPers plus a few hangers on endured ~30°C temperatures to participate in a second Soil Quality workshop in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil, from 22-24 March, the first being held last year. The workshop was organized by Phil Brookes and Phil Murray from the SoilCIP side and Bob Boddey in Brazil. As well as the wonderful venue (students didn't go to meetings like this when I was doing my PhD!), the workshop delivered some profitable outcomes in the form of drafted grant proposals and agreements to pursue student and postdoc exchange visits.



A selection of photos from Brazil taken by Felicity Crotty

Photo prize – Felicity Crotty

Felicity has been very busy with her camera. She was the winner of the 'Soil life: Agriculture, Food, Diet and Health' section of the recent competition held by the UK's [Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council](#) to showcase images of the latest research. Her winning photo, shown below, is of mites (Acari), springtails (Collembola) and other creepy-crawlies that were collected from a soil sample. The mites and springtails shown here are some of the most abundant creatures in soil and play vital roles as part of the food chain in this environment. Understanding the ecology of soil will be key to meeting the challenge of feeding 9 billion people worldwide by 2050.



Royal Agricultural Society of England review of R&D in Soil and Water Management

You may be aware that the RASE published a report into Soil and Water Management in late 2008. It was useful in highlighting the decline in funding for this area of soil science, but was criticised by some for having a rather narrow focus. The RASE has commissioned Cranfield University to lead a more widely-based review. I am one of many who has taken part in an extended telephone interview, followed by a one-day workshop to refine the views expressed in the interviews. The report is due to be published in late April, followed by a workshop to discuss its conclusions, yet to be arranged.

Environmental Change Network: Scientific and Technical Advisory Group

I've been interested and involved in the ECN from its inception but now Chair its Scientific and Technical Advisory Group. We meet once a year in March, after the Site Operators meeting and before the Steering Committee (on which I also sit). We discuss issues raised by the Site Operators, review protocols and look for new opportunities, and take the most important matters to the Steering Committee. An issue relevant to the SoilCIP is the possible impact of North Wyke's Farm Platform on its ECN site. Site Operators considered this when they met at North Wyke last year and have raised their concerns with STAG. This will be taken account of in planning discussion for the Platform. By the way, Tony Scott has just updated the Rothamsted ECN web pages. See:

<http://www.rothamsted.bbsrc.ac.uk/aen/ecn/newindex2.html>

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



IUSS Alert 59 (March 2010)

Information for and from the global soil science community

ICSU Statement on the IPCC



As a scientific organization with global representation and active engagement in global environmental change research including climate change, the International Council for Science (ICSU) has been closely following the ongoing controversy concerning the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Important issues have been raised in relation to both the interpretation of scientific knowledge, especially in making predictions of future developments, and the procedures used by the IPCC in its assessment. This statement is endorsed by the Officers of the International Council for Science (ICSU, February, 2010). ICSU is a non-governmental organization representing a global membership that includes both national scientific bodies (119 members) and international scientific unions (30 members). The statement does not necessarily represent the views of all individual Members. See www.icsu.org or click [here](#) for the statement.

Keith Goulding, 1st April 2010