

Cross-Institute Programme for Sustainable Soil Function

SoilCIP

Newsletter for May 2006



Doctoral Training Award (DTA)

After much protesting from me and the Directors about our treatment, SoilCIP has been awarded one BBSRC DTA PhD studentship for each of the next 3 years. A request for proposals will be announced soon.

CIP-NSRI links

Soil Systems Network

We have been invited, and agreed to join a proposal to NERC, led by NSRI, to create a Knowledge Transfer Network entitled 'Soil Systems Network'. The aim of the network is to bring together a range of researchers, stakeholders and policy makers to assess our understanding of how soil properties and land management practices contribute to the performance of soil functions, to identify knowledge gaps and provide training in field techniques. The proposal is being made in response to NERC's Knowledge Transfer call, deadline 12th May 2006, which is looking "...to create new communities through communication between researchers and users of science in the appropriate science, technology, public and private sector groups." For more information please see http://www.nerc.ac.uk/using/documents/network_guide3.pdf.

If successful, the network will be funded for a period of three years and encourage discussions between researchers and the user community. It would probably involve expenses-paid workshop meetings, a training programme, and a user-friendly manual of all the field soil description and sampling techniques.

Lynda Deeks, NSRI North Wyke

Lynda visited Rothamsted on 2nd May to learn about research on soil physics and nutrient modelling.

Other collaborations

I shall be visiting the Soil Science Department at the University of Reading on 6th June, and Liz Baggs, from the University of Aberdeen, is visiting Rothamsted on 26th June.

Visiting Scientists

Dr Xuejun Liu has arrived to study in the UK for a year. He will be working with me, David Powlson, Paul Poulton and Andy Macdonald at Rothamsted, and Jo Smith at the University of Aberdeen and Neil Cape and others at CEH Edinburgh to measure and model nitrogen deposition.

Kashif Nazir is a PhD student from Lahore University, Pakistan, who has just arrived at Rothamsted to work with Goetz Richter for 5 months on modelling climate change impacts on crops.

UK-US Workshop on Bio-Soil Interactions and Engineering

Richard Whalley is bidding to EPSRC with colleagues from Cambridge and Sheffield Universities in the UK and the University of California Davis, the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and the Georgia Institute of Technology in the US to hold a UK-US workshop on Bio-Soil Interactions and Engineering in the autumn of 2006 or early 2007. They have good support from the National Science Foundation in the US and hope that EPSRC will follow the US example. More details from Richard.

150th Anniversary of the Park Grass Experiment

At the end of May, Rothamsted celebrated the 150th Anniversary of the Park Grass Experiment with an international symposium, public open evening, special guest day, and staff party and BBQ. SoilCIP was well represented at the symposium: David Powlson and I were speakers and Steve McGrath, Phil Murray and Tony Scott attended. Lots more information about the experiment, with photos at:

<http://www.rothamsted.bbsrc.ac.uk/corporate/PressReleases/ParkGrass.html>

IGER Open Day

I'm sure that all North Wyke staff are aware of this, but just to remind Rothamsted SoilCIP staff that we are all invited to an Open Day celebrating 25 years of scientific research at IGER North Wyke on Thursday 29th June 2006, 10.30am - 5.00pm. I shall be there on 29th and 30th, staying on for Steve Jarvis' retirement celebrations. More details of the Open day are at:

<http://www.iger.bbsrc.ac.uk/Events/OpenDays.htm>

Welcome back!

Finally we welcome back Andy Whitmore from his sabbatical in New Zealand.

Keith Goulding, 1 June 2006