

Cross-Institute Programme for Sustainable Soil Function

SoilCIP

Newsletter for September 2007



Staff Changes

Marc Redmile-Gordon joined the SoilCIP this month. He is working with Phil Brookes and Sarah Kemmitt on the survival strategy of the soil microbial biomass. Welcome Marc!

Meanwhile Anna Swain left Phil's group earlier in the summer to work at the Institute of Animal Health at Pirbright.

We have probably not formally welcomed Kathy Haskard, who joined Murray Lark's group earlier this year to work with Murray and me on our BBSRC-funded project to study the variation in fluxes of nitrous oxide across the landscape.

We are expecting two new SoilCIP staff to start work in Steve McGrath's group next month. I'll give names and details when they arrive. Please check the distribution list attached with this newsletter to see if there are any other staff changes that should be registered with me.

Cross-Institute visits and links

Summer holidays, conferences, management courses and ISPGs have prevented me getting down to North Wyke for a few months, but I hope to be there again on 29th and 30th October.

Tony O'Donnell has informally invited me to Newcastle University to discuss SoilCIP research; I'm waiting for the formal invitation.

I was at CEH Lancaster on 28th September as a member of the panel interviewing for a new Coordinator for the Environmental Change Network. Mark Bailey, CEH Science Director for Biodiversity, was also on the panel and we again discussed SoilCIP/CEH collaboration. Mark is eager for it to be driven from the bottom up. I think we're doing well in the area of hydrology and pollutant transfers. Please let me know if you have ideas for workshops or collaborations in other areas such as those discussed at the Lancaster workshop in April 2006.

Consultation on the proposed EU Soil Framework Directive and initial Regulatory Impact Assessment

Thanks to the many of you who have responded to my request to contribute to a SoilCIP response to this consultation, details of which are at:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/soil-directive/index.htm>

I have been able to compile a respectable set of comments. There is still time for any who would still like to contribute. Comments to me, please, by **11 October** to meet the consultation deadline of 19 October 2007.

British Society of Soil Science (BSSS) autumn meeting in Aberystwyth

Sarah Kemmitt, David Powlson and I attended the annual autumn meeting of the BSSS in a beautifully sunny Aberystwyth from 10th to 12th September. We enjoyed two days of interesting and varied paper and poster presentations and a short field trip to look at the soils at Trawscoed Farm. With so many demands on our time, it's tempting to attend only those focused meetings that relate directly to our research interests, but it would be good to see a few more SoilCIP staff at BSSS meetings.

We have been asked to host next autumn's one-day meeting at Rothamsted. (One day only to encourage the best possible attendance at Eurosoil 2008 in Vienna - see below). I am currently looking for themes for the meeting and a small committee to oversee the meeting. The job will not be onerous as most of the administrative work will be done by the BSSS Administrator, Jim Gauld.

Visitor from New Zealand

Prof Kevin Tate, ex-LandCare New Zealand but now retired (although still very active), visited Rothamsted on 17th September. He discussed his current research on greenhouse gas fluxes with SoilCIP staff and presented a seminar entitled 'Can soil reduce methane emissions from New Zealand Dairy farms?' Kevin is developing some IP for reducing methane emissions in ruminants and may well be in touch with SoilCIP staff at N Wyke to discuss experiments to test his ideas.

EUROSOIL 2008

The four-yearly EUROSOIL conference takes place in Vienna from 25th to 29th August 2008. I hope to be there and would be pleased to see a strong SoilCIP presence. Please let me know if you intend to go, whether you will offer a paper or a poster, and whether you have funding. Details are at:

<http://www.ecsss.net/web/frontend/view.php?MENUEID=230>

Keith Goulding, 1st October 2007