



ISTRO INFO

**A Publication of the
International Soil Tillage Research Organization**

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GOALS AND PURPOSE FOR *ISTRO INFO*

The primary goal for assembling and distributing *ISTRO INFO* is to help facilitate communication and the exchange of ideas among ISTRO members. As your Assistant Secretary General, one of my primary tasks will be to help facilitate this communication. I plan to prepare and distribute *ISTRO INFO* quarterly and to focus each issue on new ideas, questions, and local research results from each of the ISTRO Branches and Working Groups. That means that I will need YOUR HELP and contributions to help me fulfill this goal.

What I would like is for each Branch or Working Group Chair to send me an E-mail report as soon as possible sharing what is happening and what concerns or questions your members are currently facing (the reports from the Branch in Turkey and the CTF Working Group are examples that I would like you to follow). I will then incorporate this information into future issues of *ISTRO INFO* so that we can have a “world-wide” discussion of critical Soil and Tillage management issues facing all of us. Please share any and all types of questions or up-coming events. We can only have an effective Newsletter by sharing our challenges, findings, and up-coming events with each other. Please don't worry about the quality of writing or spelling. I will do my best to smooth the rough edges without changing the basic ideas or philosophies being shared.

Ultimately, *ISTRO INFO* will be distributed by linking it to the ISTRO web site that is currently being prepared. However, to facilitate the distribution of this issue, I attempted to contact the Branch and Working Group Chairs to be sure I had a correct E-mail address. I am now asking each Chairman to please forward this document to all ISTRO members in your Branch or Working Group. I realize this distribution plan may result in some duplication and I apologize for that inconvenience, but I would rather error on duplication rather than omission to ensure communication among members. Therefore, if you are aware of any member that was not contacted or did not get a copy of this issue to *ISTRO INFO*, please forward a copy and let me know who needs to be added to our contact list. Finally, Dr. John Morrison is currently preparing an updated list with E-mail addresses for each Branch Member, but he still needs the help of several Branch and Working Group Chairs to help him complete his task. Please respond to his recent request if you have not done so.

SECRETARY GENERAL'S MESSAGE

Although I have attended all ISTRO conferences since 1988 not everybody will know me. Therefore a short introduction. I am a specialist in soil physics and soil mechanics. Main topics of research are soil compaction, trafficability, subsidence of peat soils, shrinkage of clay and peat soils, soil physical aspects in bioremediation of soil pollution. From 1997 up to 2002 I have been Associate Editor of Soil & Tillage Research. I am Chairman of the ISTRO Working Group "Subsoil Compaction". International projects I have lead are two Concerted Actions on Subsoil Compaction financed by the European Union involving 49 institutes and universities in 27 countries. The first Concerted Action focuses on subsoil compaction in Western European countries and the second one on subsoil compaction in Eastern European Countries. These concerted actions are finalized now. Results can be found on the Internet site: <http://www.subsoil-compaction.alterra.nl>. A recent European project co-ordinated by me is on the sustainable management of peat soils (<http://www.europeat.alterra.nl>). I served as Assistant Secretary General of ISTRO in 2000-2003 and became Secretary General for two periods (2003-2009). My address is: J.J.H. van den Akker, Alterra Wageningen UR, P.O. Box 47, 6700 AA Wageningen, The Netherlands, tel. ++31 317 474282, fax. ++31 317 419000, e-mail: janjh.vandenakker@wur.nl.



My goal for the first period will be the improvement of the contacts between the ISTRO organization and the ISTRO members. Important tools to realize this goal are ISTRO Info and the ISTRO website www.ISTRO.org. Doug Karlen is responsible for ISTRO Info and I am responsible for the website. The website has been used to inform and to promote the ISTRO 2003 conference in Brisbane, Australia and is now in reconstruction to become the general

ISTRO site. The website will include pages for the ISTRO Branches, Working Groups, Soil & Tillage Research, etc. In the next ISTRO Info you will hear more about the ISTRO website.

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2003 POST-CONFERENCE BOARD MEETING

Thanks to the leadership of Past President Jeff Tullbeg, the 16th ISTRO conference at the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia was a success and actually generated a small financial surplus for the Society. About 220 people attended the conference, which was more than expected considering the problems associated with SARS and the Iraq war. Budgeting funds for professional assistance in the organization of the conference and setting up an internet web site significantly reduced demands on the organizing committee. The mid-term Board meeting was also very helpful.

Elisabeta Dumitru was recognized and thanked for chairing the ISRTO Awards Committee for 2000 – 2003. Implementation of the Scholarships for attending the ISTRO meetings proved to be the major part of the Committee's work. This was recognized as being very important with regard to the conference organization, so for 2006, the President and President-elect will have responsibility for the Awards Committee. The Board agreed to pay for airfare, registration, and accommodation for four Scholarships in 2006. One of the Scholarships is the Van Ouwerkerk Scholarship. Three will be restricted to people from developing countries (defined as the countries on the World Bank list with the reduced ISTRO membership contribution). It was disappointing that three out of four Scholarship recipients for the 2003 meeting were absent during the General Assembly. It will be pointed out that in the future, winners should plan to be present at the General Assembly.

John Morrison reported that he was continuing to work with the Branch Chairs, seeking to obtain accurate membership records and dues contributions. Two inactive Working Groups – Crop Response to the Soil Physical Environment and Economic Aspects of Tillage and Traffic – were dissolved, although these groups could be re-established if members are interested. The six active ISTRO Working Groups are: (1) Tillage Erosion, (2) Resource-Conserving Planting Systems for Developing Country Agriculture, (3) Subsoil Compaction, (4) Visual Soil Examination and Evaluation, (5) Soil Structure, and (6) Controlled Traffic Farming. Chairs for these groups are Don Reicosky, Jeff Tullberg, Jan van den Akker, David McKenzie, Alvin

Smucker, and Tim Chamen. Members interested in contributing to any of these groups should contact the appropriate leader.

NEW EDITOR-IN-CHIEF SOIL & TILLAGE RESEARCH (STR)

Martin Carter resigned as one of the three Editors-in-Chief of STR. He is thanked for the important job he did from 1985 on. The ISTRO Board asked Prof. Rattan Lal to be appointed as one of the three Editors-in-Chief of Soil & Tillage Research and we are glad to announce that he is willing to do so.

THANK YOU FROM WARD VOORHEES

It is with great pleasure and a sense of humility that I accept the ISTRO Lifetime Honorary Membership given to me during the 16th ISTRO Congress recently held in Brisbane, Australia. This was the first ISTRO Conference I have not attended since participating in the 1979 Conference at Hohenheim University in Germany.

I have many fond memories from my association with ISTRO, including struggling with some of the issues surrounding the formation of the ISTRO Constitution and the beginnings of the Soil & Tillage Research journal. Serving as Editor of this journal was challenging, but also rewarding as this journal is now one of the top scientific publications in the world.

Serving on the ISTRO Board of Directors gave me the opportunity to meet and interact with some of the finest scientists and people in the world. ISTRO played a major role in my professional research career in soil compaction. While the problems associated with use of large heavy machinery on agricultural fields remain a world-wide problem, I am thankful that I was able to make a small contribution to the understanding and solution of this problem. The Working Group on Subsoil Compaction by High Axle Loads was, in my estimation, the model around which other Working Groups should be formed.

I belonged to several professional organizations during my 44-year career but ISTRO will always remain as my favorite organization. Perhaps this is because we have a common interest in preserving soil as a resource through proper management of the various operations that mankind imposes on the land.

To the ISTRO Board of Directors, please accept my most gracious thank you for the Lifetime Honorary Membership. To the general membership, keep up the good research that makes me proud to be associated with this organization. Although I am now retired, I will keep a keen interest in ISTRO, and hope to see many of you at a future ISTRO Conference.

Best Wishes,

Ward B. Voorhees

Collaborator, USDA-ARS

Morris, Minnesota, USA

NOMINATIONS FOR 2012 MEETING SITE

At the Brisbane conference, China, Chili, Brazil and South Africa were proposed as potential sites for the 2012 ISTRO meetings. The Nominations Committee (Jeff Tullberg and Laura Alakuku) is seeking input regarding these or other potential sites. If you would like to make a recommendation to this committee or to any ISTRO Board member, please keep the following in mind. (1) The location of previous meetings, (2) availability of resources (people, infrastructure, and financial support), (3) desirability of increasing the visibility of ISTRO among researchers in that region, (4) implications for travel costs, and (5) potential president-elect nominees.

BRANCH UPDATES

Turkey -- A workshop focusing on "Conservation Tillage and No-Till Planting" was held in October 2003. Approximately 55 scientists from different locations of Turkey participated and found the Workshop to be very informative and useful. Another workshop is planned for 2005, but the organizers are not sure if this will be a national or international event. For more information, please contact Associate Professor Engin Cakir at ecakir@zzziraat.ege.edu.tr. Finally, the leaders are also pleased to report that the Branch is growing and becoming more active. Members are also looking forward to hosting the 2009 ISTRO meetings.

WORKING GROUP UPDATES

Controlled Traffic Farming (CTF) – is a Working Group being coordinated by Tim Chamen (tim.chamen@btclick.com). The Group's goals are twofold. First, to critically review both scientific and practical evidence of the benefits and shortcomings of controlled traffic farming systems and to identify gaps in knowledge and areas of research where further work is needed (especially with regard to the linkage between tillage, traffic and favorable soil structure). A second goal is to encourage and facilitate the use of CTF in a way that aims to deliver benefits in a wide range of climates and earth ecozones, and in a manner that improves the financial viability of food production while addressing environmental and food safety issues. There are currently 26 members contributing to this Group. Initial plans are being made to have an international workshop/conference in mid-2005, probably in the UK. The Group has also developed a web site where CTF is explained and where news is posted (www.controlledtrafficfarming.com). They are also in the process of producing a “flyer” for CTF that will be distributed to all members of the group but can be customized to suit local conditions.

SOIL QUALITY AND TILLAGE INTERACTIONS

For those interested in the concept of soil quality, I would like to bring your attention to some recent publications. First, there are two interesting editorials in the July-August issue of the Journal of Soil and Water Conservation entitled “Soil Quality: Humankind's Foundation for Survival” and “Deficiencies in the Soil Quality Concept and Its Application.” These two viewpoints present some of the reasons for and scientific concerns regarding the concept in the U.S. Reprints are available from the senior authors (karlen@nstl.gov) and (john.letey@ucr.edu) for those who do not have access to this journal. Also, a new book entitled Managing Soil Quality: Challenges in Modern Agriculture, edited by P. Schjønning, S. Elmholt, and B.T. Christensen has just been published by CABI (www.cabi-publishing.org/Bookshop ISBN 0 85199 671X). Copies of the book are available for £75.00 (US\$120.00). Finally, a special issue of Soil and Tillage Research has been submitted to Elsevier for publication during 2004. The special issue will be entitled “Soil Quality as an Indicator of Sustainable Tillage Practices” and includes papers from Canada, Croatia, Hungary, Portugal, Switzerland and the

USA. The authors address many of the soil management issues associated with the soil quality concept and have presented some very interesting results from a variety of field studies.

16TH ISTRO CONFERENCE – 10TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY MINUTES

Location: Univ of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia -- Friday, July 18, 2003

1. Call to Order and Opening Remarks by ISTRO President Jeff Tullberg
President Jeff Tullberg welcomed participants to the General Assembly and called the Assembly to order.

2. Minutes from the 9th General Assembly, Fort Worth, Texas, USA
The minutes were accepted by the Assembly

3. Reports

- President's report – *Jeff Tullberg*

Jeff Tullberg reported that the Conference appeared to be successful. The Conference was expected to be self-supporting or having even a small positive result. About 220 people attended the conference. This is more than expected, certainly considering the problems with SARS and the Iraq war. He thanks the Conference Organizing Committee, especially Willem Hoogmoed. Further thanks go to David McKenzie, Des McGarry and Don Yule who organized the pre- and post-conference tours. He acknowledged the contribution of Sally Brown who had been hired to provide a Conference Secretariat.

- **Secretary General's report – *Bev Kay***

The Secretary-General announced the results of the election. The following have been elected:

- President-elect: Engin Cakir, 2003-2006 (acclamation)
- President: Rainer Horn, 2003-2006 (acclamation)
- Secretary General: Jan van den Akker, 2003-2009 (acclamation)
- Asst Secretary General: Doug Karlen, 2003-2009
- Board members: Laura Alakukku and Allen Torbert, 2003-2009

The nomination committee advised to elect the Secretary General for six years to take care of a good continuation in the ISTRO organization. The Board agreed with the six years nomination. The Secretary General thanked the Conference Location and Nominations Committee.

At this moment ISTRO has 221 paying members. In the minutes of the 9th General Assembly it was announced that ISTRO had about 600 members, however, many were not active and did not pay contribution.

The journal Soil & Tillage Research published by Elseviers is associated to ISTRO. Elseviers pays royalties to ISTRO and nominations of the Editors-in-Chief and members of the Editorial Board must be approved by the ISTRO Board. The journal is now published in 5 volumes of 2 issues, total 10 issues per year. Soil & Tillage is doing well. The Impact Factor increased to 1.115 and the journal is now ranked 9th of 29 journals in the Agriculture. Martin Carter is resigning as one of the three Editors-in-Chief of STR. He is thanked for the important job he did from 1985 on. The Board is responsible for making a nomination with Elsevier making the

formal appointment. One of the advantages of being member of ISTRO is a subscription to Soil & Tillage Research for a reduced price of just US \$ 75.- per year. A small number of paid subscriptions (10 in total) of Soil & Tillage Research were not delivered in 2000, 2001 and 2003. We have refused to pay invoices sent to us by Elsevier for all subscriptions over the period 2000-2003 incl. until this problem has been resolved. Failure of Elsevier to deal with the problem has been due, in part, to ongoing turnover in staff at Elsevier in the USA (eight different people have had responsibility for dealing with this problem since Apr 2001). A commitment was made in Mar 2003 by Elsevier to send the back issues by courier to the people involved. However, two queries sent to Elsevier in the past month regarding action on this commitment have not been answered. The Board agreed that the Secretary-General should check with the subscribers to see if these back issues have been delivered and, if they have not, that they be offered a replacement subscription for 2004. The Board further recommended that we then pay the invoices from Elsevier for 2000-2003, adjusted for subscriptions not delivered. The names of the subscribers needing replacement subscriptions would then be added to the list of 2004 subscribers.

Greater emphasis has been placed on electronic communication in the past three years with a concomitant reduction in mailing costs. There are currently 280 active e-mail addresses of members on file. About 90% of members paid to 2003 or later have active e-mail addresses. One of the main problems with e-mail addresses is that they change.

Please send new e-mail addresses to the Secretary General Jan van den Akker:
<janjh.vandenakker@wur.nl>

Two issues of ISTRO-Info were distributed; one in fall 2002 and one prior to the present Conference. This amount is too low. Therefore the Assistant Secretary General Doug Karlen is made responsible for ISTRO-Info. Please send info to be published in ISTRO-Info to Doug Karlen.

The first ISTRO website was established by Birl Lowery. The new website (ISTRO.ORG) now functioning as Conference website will be moved to Wageningen and will be the responsibility of the Secretary General Jan van den Akker. The website ISTRO.ORG will be reorganization in a few months and will include pages for the ISTRO Branches, Working Groups, Soil & Tillage Research, etc.

The Secretary General's report was accepted by the Assembly

- Treasurer's report – Guy Richard

The Treasurer presented the Financial report for the period 2000-2003 (attached). Guy Richard noted that income exceeded expenses for the period 2000-2003 by \$31,861 giving an overall surplus of \$76, 238. However, it must be noted that about US \$ 13,500 was not yet paid to Elseviers. This will be paid after solving the problems with the not delivered subscriptions. Guy Richard noted that there were about 221 paid members in 2003, down from 259 in 2000. Additional members were expected to pay their membership dues at the meeting. Subscriptions to Soil and Tillage Research had fallen from 80 in 2000 to 68 in 2003.

The treasurer noted that the good financial position of ISTRO makes it possible to hire professionals to improve the website and to support initiatives of branches, working groups or individual members.

The Treasurer's report was accepted by the Assembly

4. Working Groups

Short oral reports were presented to the General Assembly by the Chairs of the Working Groups or representatives: Tillage Erosion (represented by Don Reicosky), Resource-conserving Planting Systems for Developing Country Agriculture (Jeff Tullberg), Subsoil Compaction (Jan van den Akker), Visual Soil Examination and Evaluation (David McKenzie), Soil Structure (Rainer Horn). A new Working Group "Controlled Traffic Farming" was presented by his Chairman Tim Chamen. The WG on Soil Structure will be led in future by Bev Kay and Alvin Smucker. There was no response of two Working Groups: "Crop Response to the Soil Physical Environment" and "Economic Aspects of Tillage and Traffic". These two WG's were not active during 6 years and will be formally dissolved at the Post-Conference Board meeting. However, a revival of these WG's will remain possible. Jan van den Akker noted that the WG's will get their own page on ISTRO.ORG, where the WG's will be introduced, reports will be available and will include (if available) shortcuts to websites of the WG's.

5. Branches

The chair of the ISTRO branches committee John Morrison presented the report. ISTRO Branches currently exist in Bulgaria, Estonia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Nigeria, Poland, Romania, Russia, the Ukraine, Kenya, Turkey and Pakistan. John Morrison noted that, although the Board had approved the formation of a Branch in China at a meeting of the Board in 2000, the request to form a Branch had been withdrawn until additional government approval was obtained. It should be noted that only Branches that are official recognized by their National Government can be recognized as official ISTRO Branche by the ISTRO Board. It was noted that there had been difficulties in the past year getting updated lists of members from many Branches and that fees for the members were not being forwarded to the Treasurer. This makes it impossible to ISTRO to know who is member of ISTRO and to send information to these members. It also makes the financial situation of these branched unclear. The Board agreed that Branches that are not submitting a list of members and associated fees to the Treasurer would no longer be considered active Branches and would not be listed on the website. It should be noted that individual members of developing countries remain their right on a reduced ISTRO fee, even if they are not represented by a Branch.

6. Awards

Jeff Tullberg reminded the audience that the scholarship awards are specifically for promising young researchers to help them in their career.

Recognition of Scholarship winners :

Dr Martin Diaz-Zorita, University of Bueonos Aires, ARGENTINA

Dr Attila Megyes, Debrecen University, HUNGARY

Dr Kestutis Romaneckas, Lithuanian University of Agriculture, LITHUANIA

Dr Rachid Mrabet, National Institute Of Agricultural Research, MOROCCO

Ward Voorhees was nominated to Honorary Member.

Ward Voorhees could not attend the conference. A thank note of Ward Voorhees was cited by Jeff Tullberg.

7. New Business: Motions

Eligibility for a reduction in membership fees:

The Board proposes that the World Bank classification of economies be used to determine eligibility for a reduction in membership fees. The classification is described on the World Bank website: <http://www.worldbank.org/data/countryclass/countryclass.html> It was acknowledged that acceptance of this principle would mean that some members that have been paying full fees would be eligible for a reduced fee.

Motion: That the World Bank classification of economies be used to determine eligibility for a reduction in membership fees in ISTRO. Members from Low- Income, Lower-Middle Income and Upper-Middle Income Economies would be eligible for a reduction in membership fees. The economic status of countries will be updated at the General Assembly of ISTRO at each triennial Conference to determine eligibility for the next three years. The chair called for a vote to accept the motion. The Assembly approved the recommendation with 0 opposed

Membership Fees:

Motion: That the membership fee remain at \$7.00 US for members meeting the preceding eligibility requirement. The chair called for a vote to accept the motion. The Assembly approved the recommendation with 0 opposed

8. Introduction of New Officers and Board Members

New Officers and Board members were introduced by the President Jeff Tullberg

- President – *Rainer Horn*
- Secretary General – *Jan van den Akker*
- Assistant Secretary General – *Doug Karlen*
- Treasurer – *Guy Richard*
- Board Members: *Laura Alakukka, Allen Torbert*
- Past President: – *Jeff Tullberg*

The Assembly confirmed the election of new officers and the Board members by vote.

Jeff Tullberg officially passed the ISTRO gavel to Rainer Horn, the new President with best wishes for the next three years.

9. Recognition of Retiring ISTRO Officers

President Rainer Horn recognized each of the retiring ISTRO officers and Board members. Appreciation was expressed to the outgoing Past President John Morrison, outgoing Secretary General Bev Kay and retiring Board Members Marta Birkas and Trond Borresen

10. ISCO 2004

The 13th International Soil Conservation Organization Conference will be held in Brisbane, 4-9 July. For more information visit the conference web site: www.icms.com.au/isco2004

11. Plans for the 17th Conference in Germany in 2006 – *Rainer Horn*

Rainer Horn introduced the participants of the General Assembly to current plans for the 17th Conference of ISTRO, which will be held in Kiel, Germany. The Conference will be held end of August / begin of September at the Christian Albrechts University of Kiel. Members are encouraged to begin planning now to attend the Conference. Website: www.soils.uni-kiel.de/istro

12. Closing

Rainer Horn formally closed the 16th Conference of ISTRO.

FINAL COMMENTS

In closing, I want to again stress that the quality of *ISTRO INFO* will depend on the sharing of information among all of us. As your newly elected Assistant Secretary General, I will do my best to distribute the information that I receive in a timely and efficient manner. However, I need your input. This is the only way we can function as a truly “**INTERNATIONAL SOIL TILLAGE RESEARCH ORGANIZATION**”!