



ISTRO INFO

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

February 2005

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ISTRO INFO – 2005 NUMBER 1

I certainly hope that all of you had a good holiday season and that the new year is off to a good start. I am pleased to report that several of the ISTRO Branches have sent reports that I am sharing in this issue of ISTRO-INFO. Please continue to send me information about conferences, working group meetings, successful research or other types of information that your colleagues might be interested in reading about. My goal for 2005 is to have four issues but to do so I need information to share. As stated before, please continue to circulate ISTRO-INFO to non-members in your various institutions and organizations, invite them to see our website www.ISTRO.org and of course to join our organization.

Doug Karlen
Assistant Secretary General

INTER-CONGRESS MEETING SET FOR KEIL, GERMANY

The ISTRO Board will meet in Kiel, Germany on April 21-22, 2005. This will give Board Members an opportunity to meet with the local organizing committee and to see the facilities for the 17th ISTRO Conference that will be held in Kiel from August 28th through September 3rd 2006. If you have any concerns that you want to bring to the Board's attention, please send them to our President Rainer Horn rhorn@soils.uni-kiel.de or the Secretary General Jan J.H. van den Akker at janjh.vandenakker@wur.nl.

ADDRESS CHANGE

ISTRO Treasurer, Guy Richard has relocated and now works in the Unit of Soil Science of INRA in Orléans, France which is located approximately 100 km south of Paris. His new address is: Guy Richard, INRA, Centre de Recherche d'Orléans, Unité de Science du Sol, Domaine de Limère, Avenue de la Pomme de Pin, Ardon, BP 20619, 45166 OLIVET Cedex, France. His e-mail is GuyRichard@orleans.inra.fr.

III WORLD CONGRESS ON CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE

The III World Congress on Conservation Agriculture (IIIWCCA) will be held in Nairobi, Kenya in October 2005. The theme is “Linking Conservation, Productivity, and Livelihoods” with expectations that about 700 people from all continents will participate. The Organizing Committee plans to have a special focus on the practical impact and applications of Conservation Agriculture on livelihoods and the environment. To help accomplish this goal, a large number of farmers and practitioners will be encouraged to attend the Congress. ISTRO members, Working Groups, and Branches are invited to participate in the Congress by presenting the results of studies focused on sustainable soil management/use.

For more information about the conference, please see the website www.act.org.zw or contact the Congress Secretariate; No. 9, Balmoral Road, Borrowdale, Harare, Zimbabwe. Tel: +263-4-882107; Fax: +263-4-885597; or by e-mail at actnetwork@africaonline.co.zw.

Respectfully submitted,

E. Chuma, Chairperson
Congress Organising Committee, IIIWCCA

ISTRO BRANCH – CZECH REPUBLIC TO HOST CONFERENCE

The Department of Soil Management within the Research Institute for Fodder Plants Ltd., in Troubsko along with the Research Institute for Crop Production in Praha and Mendel University of Agriculture and Forestry in Brno invites ISTRO members to the International Soil Conference that will take place on June 29 – July 1, 2005 in Brno, Czech Republic. The conference will provide opportunities for exchange of the latest results on soil management in natural and agricultural systems. For more information, please contact Barbora Badalíková, Research Institute for Fodder Crops, Ltd., Zahradní 1, 664 41 Troubsko, Czech Republic, badalikova@vupt.cz Fax: +420 547 227 385

18TH WORLD CONGRESS OF SOIL SCIENCE

The 18th World Congress of Soil Science will be held July 9-15, 2006 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA. The Congress will feature plenary sessions, symposia, poster sessions, scientific and technical exhibitions, and working sessions of the IUSS Divisions, Commissions, Working Groups and Standing Committees. Cultural tours/events for accompanying participants and an array of scientific tours throughout the USA are also being planned.

Registration for the Congress is now open at www.18wcoss.org at a cost of \$550.

Abstracts can be submitted at www.18wcoss.org.

SOIL QUALITY CONFERENCE IN IRAN

The Department of Soil Science at Isfahan University of Technology in Iran is planning an international conference entitled "Human Impacts on Soil Quality Attributes in the Arid and Semi-arid Regions" for September 12-16, 2005. For more information about the conference, please see the website www.iut.ac.ir/cesoil or contact Dr. Mohammad Ali Hajabbasi, Associate Professor of Soil Science, Isfahan University of Technology, Isfahan, Iran 84154. Phone: +98-311-3913477; FAX: +98-311-3913471; E-mail: hajabbas@cc.iut.ac.ir

SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION SOCIETY (SWCS) UPDATE

The 2005 SWCS conference will be held in Rochester, N.Y., USA from July 30th through August 4th. The conference will focus on four key topics: managing landscapes for environmental quality; assessing and communicating the effectiveness of conservation and environmental programs; the growing debate around water use; and consumer demand and policy effects on agricultural resources. For more information please see: www.swcs.org.

VISUAL SOIL STRUCTURE ASSESSMENT MEETING

INRA in cooperation with the ISTRO “Visual Soil Examination and Evaluation” Working Group will host a meeting on 25 – 27 May 2005 in Esstrées-Mons, France. This meeting is an outcome of discussions at the Brisbane ISTRO Conference, where a Compendium of Methods for the direct (numeric) field assessment of soil physical conditions was prepared. This showed that quite independently, 11 different methods had been developed in eight countries. The objective of the meeting in France is to bring together each scientist who has developed a method to demonstrate soil evaluation in the field. This will enable all participants to compare each of these 11 different methods of visual assessment. The methods fall into two groups, those that are used to describe and evaluate the physical condition of the topsoil (tilled layer) and those that look at the entire profile (root zone).

There will be an emphasis on the identification of compaction or other limiting layers. One complementary objective will be to try to reach agreement on which method(s) should be used to deal with specific problems such as compaction or structure degradation.

Following the meeting, two reports may be published:

- One giving an account of the Meeting, including a review of past methods and
- A second that outlines any method or methods that have been agreed upon and recommended.

The time during the meeting will be divided between oral presentations and demonstrations of the methods in the field. We hope to be able to examine a range of conditions to test each method, looking at contrasting soil structures and different tillage systems – e.g. mouldboard ploughing versus reduced tillage or soil conditions such as compaction versus non compaction.

For more information please contact Hubert Boizard at boizard@mons.inra.fr

3RD NATIONAL CONTROLLED TRAFFIC FARMING CONFERENCE

The Controlled Traffic Farming (CTF) 05 conference will be held on July 20-22, 2005 on the Gatton Campus, University of Queensland. It will be a farm-focused forum for growers, advisers, scientists and technology providers to share information on the science and practice of more profitable and sustainable farming systems. Conference sessions will include:

- Broad acre controlled traffic
- Raised bed farming, and applications in cotton, cane and horticulture.
- Farm layout, soil impact, resource conservation and environmental impacts
- GPS and guidance technology for farming. Equipment developments.
- GIS, yield mapping, imagery, spatial information and their applications.
- Farm systems: how do we change?

CTF is an Australian-led revolution in farming systems technology, now used widely in the Australian cotton and grain industries and increasingly in sugar and horticulture. It is sometimes called raised bed farming, tram-lining or tram-tracking, promises major improvements in the profitability and sustainability of crop production. A CTF technology, systems and science trade show will operate throughout the conference, and be seen in action at the field day on the final morning. Specialists and commercial workshops will be offered on the final afternoon. The National CTF Young Growers group will also hold its first meeting at the conference which is being organized with the assistance of a national controlled traffic committee. Anticipated costs are: Conference Registration \$300 and Accommodation (for two nights) \$170.

For more information and future updates by mail please contact Sally Brown, Conference Connections, P.O. Box 108, Kenmore, QLD Australia 4069 (Attention "CTF05") or by e-mail at sally.brown@uq.net.au (again noting "CTF05" in the Subject Line). As more details become available, they will also be posted on the website www.ctf04.org.au.

CONGRATULATIONS DR. BIAMAH

On February 21, 2005 Professor Elijah K. Biamah will be awarded his PhD. His thesis title was "Coping with Drought: Options for soil and water management in semi-arid Kenya." Also, Dr. Biamah passed his interview of professorship in Environmental Conservation in April 2004 – 20 years after he joined Nairobi University as a Lecturer. Before joining Nairobi University, he worked for 11 years and rose to be the National Coordinator of Soil and Water Conservation in the Ministry of Agriculture.

NEWS FROM THE HUNGARIAN BRANCH

During 2004, eight workshops addressing *Climatic Changes – Impacts and Reactions* were held. Eight ISTRO Branch members joined this national project that is being coordinated by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Their focus will be on agricultural adaptation strategies. ISTRO Branch members also participated in an *Agricultural Engineering Conference* at Szent Istvan University Gödöllő, the *3rd Alps-Adria Scientific Workshop* in Dubrovnik, Croatia, and a national conference entitled *Innovation, harmony between science and practice in agriculture* that was held in Debrecen University.

In July, a *Day of Stubble* symposium held in Gödöllő, by Faculty of Mechanical Engineering. Two ISTRO members made presentations on the agronomic and mechanical aspects of stubble tillage. Also at the conference, KÜHNE Ltd. Agricultural Machine Factory (founded in 1856) presented their new stubble mulch cultivator. In October the 30th Ovar Scientific Days were held in Mosonmagyaróvár. Eight ISTRO members made presentations addressing the conference theme which was *Agricultural Production – Harmony with Nature*.

The Branch members would like to congratulate Laszlo Vasa (our youngest member) who passed the PhD examination at Szent István University, Gödöllő in July, and to Peter Pepo for completion of the DSc degree at Hungarian Academy of Sciences in

December. Branch members were saddened in October when Jozsef Szeles, a member since 2001, passed away. He was only 50 years old. Since the Branch was founded, four active members and three honorary members have died. Currently, 53 members are registered with the Branch.

Marta Birkas

Chair, Hungarian Branch of ISTRO

HAPPENINGS IN THE UKRAINIAN BRANCH

The Ukrainian Branch currently has 15 members primarily from the research institute and high schools. Last year recommendations for minimum tillage were generalized based on research results from the past years. As a result, different types of tillage are recommended for nearly 11 million of the 30 million hectares of arable land in the country. The recommendations were reviewed by the Ministry for Agrarian Policy of the Ukraine and are being recommended for adoption.

A majority of the ISTRO members participated in opening-up the National program of soil protection. It was submitted for discussion in the Supreme Council of country and is expected to be accepted and funded in 2006. Goals for 2005 include increasing ISTRO membership, conducting a conference, and increasing the publication of scientific information focused on tillage, soil conservation, and society.

Prof. V.V. Medvedev

Ukrainian ISTRO Branch

RUSSIAN ISTRO BRANCH FACES MANY CHALLENGES

The Russian Ministry of Science was dissolved in spring 2004 and as a result many who supported this ISTRO Branch were made redundant. It is also becoming very difficult for Russian scientists to afford their memberships. This issue will be addressed

at the up-coming Board Meeting. Please join me in extending our understanding to Professor Dmitry and his colleagues as they struggle to bring the best possible soil and tillage research information to their country.

FINAL COMMENTS

Once again, I want to thank everyone who submitted information for me to include in this edition of ISTRO INFO. Please continue to send announcements, working group reports, and information about your research and technology transfer successes and failures. If I have misinterpreted any of the reports that were summarized, please send me a correction. It certainly won't be the first time I have made an error! Also, if there are specific types of information that you would like to see included in ISTRO INFO, please let me know. As I have stated before, communication is the key to having an effective **International Soil and Tillage Research Organization**.