ISTRO INFO
NEWSLETTER
of the
International Soil Tillage Research Organisation

José Dörner

Dear Friends, the present ISTRO INFO informs you of the different board positions that need to be filled during the next few months. Please do not hesitate to send an email to Lars or me if you are interested in serving as a board member.

At the same time, we will actualize the format of our ISTRO Info in the next months, and we are working on the actualization of the ISTRO Website, improving some sections as the membership page.

At the end of July, we had a midterm meeting in Abuja, the Federal Capital of Nigeria, and the most relevant topics related to the next ISTRO Conference will be informed in the next weeks.

⌘ Obituary

With deep sorrow, we announce the passing of Professor Emeritus Donald Gabriels.

Born in Ghent, Belgium, May 30, 1946 – Passed away peacefully at home in De Pinte, July 22, 2025

Donald Gabriels was a devoted husband to Mrs. Jessie Myttenaere, a beloved father and grandfather, a caring brother, and a deeply respected scholar, mentor, and colleague.

He began his higher education at the Royal Military Academy in Laken, before graduating as an agricultural engineer from Ghent University in 1969. He obtained a Master's degree in Soil Physics from Iowa State University, USA (1971), and a PhD in Agricultural Sciences from Ghent University (1974). In 1976, he pursued postdoctoral research in Soil Erosion and Soil Conservation at Purdue University, Indiana, to which he later returned for a sabbatical year at the end of his career.

At Ghent University's Faculty of Bioscience Engineering, he first worked as a fellow of the Fund for Scientific Research (FWO) and, from 1992 onward, as Associate Professor in the Department of Soil Management and Soil Care. There he coordinated the Research Group on Soil Erosion and Soil Conservation and served for several years as Department Chair. His teaching and research focused on soil erosion, soil conservation, land degradation, desertification, and sustainable land use.

His impact extended far beyond Belgium. He was Coordinator of the International Centre for Eremology (ICE) and Chair of the UNESCO Chair in Eremology, establishing global recognition for the study of dryland environments. He also served as Coordinator of CAZALAC (Centro del Agua para Zonas Áridas y Semiáridas en América Latina y el Caribe), based in La Serena, Chile, a regional network uniting 22 countries, including Cuba, in collaborative research on water management in arid and semi-arid regions.

Donald co-founded and co-directed the College on Soil Physics at the International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) in Trieste, where he served as director from 1983 onwards. He co-organized and lectured at the Latin American School of Soil Physics (ELAFIS) in Peru, Brazil, and Venezuela. He lectured worldwide on soil erosion, soil conservation, and soil technology, and initiated and participated in numerous international research projects.

He was a prolific scholar, publishing extensively in both academic and non-academic outlets. He founded and served as editor of the international journal *Soil Technology*. As a supervisor and mentor, he guided many PhD and MSc theses, often involving fieldwork conducted across diverse environments worldwide. He also organized numerous symposia, workshops, and congresses on topics such as soil erosion, rainfall simulation, soil surface sealing, and crusting.

Donald held prominent positions in the international scientific community, including vice-chair of the Subcommission on Land Degradation of the International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS), founder

and council member of the European Society for Soil Conservation (ESSC), treasurer of the International Soil Science Society, and honorary member of the Polish Soil Science Society. His expertise was widely sought: he served as consultant and project coordinator for the FAO, the European Union, the Belgian and Flemish governments, and universities and research institutes across Africa, Latin America, Asia, and Europe.

In addition to his academic accomplishments, Donald was also a dedicated athlete, trainer, and mentor in several Belgian sports associations.

Wim Cornelis

Department of Environment, Ghent University

⌘ Membership for ISTRO

ISTRO International Soil Tillage Research Organisation
http://www.istro.org

MEMBERSHIP FEES FOR:
Have 1 year and 3 year options for each category

Option	Membership categories		
	Regular	Regular*/Student/Retired	Corporate
Membership including ISTRO-INFO	US$ 21	US$ 7	US$ 84
Membership including ISTRO-INFO + *Soil & Tillage Research* Journal Electronic	**US$ 103**	**US$ 89**	**US$ 166**

*Regular membership fees is reduced to US$ 7 for members from Low- Income, Lower-Middle Income and Upper-Middle Income Economies as defined on the World Bank website.

For more information, please visit this webpage.

⌘ Nominees for President-elect

The opportunity to host the 2033 ISTRO conference is now open. As members may already be aware of, the main ISTRO conference is held every 3 years. The 23rd will be held in Nigeria in 2027 and the 24th will take place in Croatia. Those interested in holding the 25th conference in 2033 should nominate for ISTRO President-elect (and thus serve on the ISTRO board). In the first instance, they should contact Secretary-General Lars J. Munkholm (lars.munkholm@agro.au.dk) or Assistant Secretary-General José Dörner (josedorner@uach.cl) on or before November 30th, 2025, to discuss their interest.

⌘ Call for new Assistant Secretary General

The Assistant Secretary General position will be vacant after the ISTRO conference in Abuja, Nigeria in 2027, where José Dörner will take over from Lars J. Munkholm as Secretary General. The position involves service for 6 years as Assistant Secretary General followed by 6 years of service as Secretary General. The Assistant Secretary is responsible for ISTRO INFO and assists the Secretary General and the ISTRO Board in the planning and coordination of ISTRO business. Nominations are being accepted from all ISTRO members in good standing. If a member wishes to nominate a colleague or even themselves, please send the name, a brief biographical statement outlining the candidate's qualifications for the Assistant Secretary General position, and an affirmation that the candidate is willing to be on the ballot and to serve if elected to Secretary General Lars J. Munkholm on or before December 31st 2025. Please use the email address lars.munkholm@agro.au.dk for this communication.

⌘ Nominations for Board positions

Nominations for minimum two and maximum three Board positions of 6 years and are now being accepted from all ISTRO members in good standing. We aim at a good geographical spread and a gender balance. The current ISTRO Board has a good geographical spread and could improve the gender balance (4 out of 12 members are female). Therefore, we strongly encourage our female members to consider this opportunity.

If a member wishes to nominate a colleague or even themselves, please send the name, a brief biographical statement outlining the candidate's qualifications, and an affirmation that the candidate is willing to be on the ballot and to serve if elected to Secretary General Lars J. Munkholm on or before December 1st, 2025. Please use the email address lars.munkholm@agro.au.dk for this communication. Depending upon the number of nominations received, the current ISTRO Board members will identify six potential Board candidates. A ballot will be prepared and distributed to members in good standing around February 1st 2026. ISTRO members

elected to these positions will assume their new positions following the ISTRO conference in Abuja, Nigeria, in 2027. If two or fewer nominations are received, a ballot will not be required.

General requirements for Board members are to serve for a period of 6 years (2027–2033), to be available to attend pre- and post-conference Board meetings (held at the triennial conference) as well as a mid-congress Board meeting at the location of the 2030 and 2033 Triennial conference sites, to serve in various liaison positions to ISTRO Branch and/or Working Groups, and to actively participate in discussions and email exchanges associated with ISTRO business. Although funds for travel to ISTRO Board meetings are available, it really helps the Organization if the candidate has some mechanism to help cover a portion of their travel expenses so that ISTRO dues can remain at their very modest level.

If you have any questions about any of these opportunities, please contact Lars J. Munkholm (lars.munkholm@agro.au.dk) or José Dörner (josedorner@uach.cl).

⌘ Upcoming Meetings and Events.

October

SUITMA13 International Conference. October 5th – 9th, 2025. Pisa, Italy. For more information and links visit the webpage.

INNOVATION IN CLIMATE RESEARCH FOR SOCIETAL TRANSFORMATION- CONFERENCE SISC2025. October 22nd -24th, 2025. Salerno, Italy. For more information and links visit the webpage.

4TH INTERNATIONAL AND 16TH NATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE SERBIAN SOCIETY OF SOIL SCIENCE. October 20th – 23rd, 2025. Vrdnik, Fruške Terme, Serbia. For more information and links visit the webpage.

XV CHILEAN SOIL SCIENCE CONGRESS. October 27th-30th, 2025. La Serena, Chile. For more information and links visit the webpage.

November

10TH EDITION FESP (FIRE EFFECTS ON SOIL PROPERTIES). November 25th -28th, 2025. UFRO, Pucón Campus, Chile. For more information and links visit the webpage.

December

ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND EARLY CAREERS CONFERENCE BSSS- Resilient Soils for a Sustainable Future. 1st-5th, 2025. For more information and links visit the webpage.

2026

April

THE 4TH GLOBAL SOIL BIODIVERSITY CONFERENCE (GSB 2026). April 12th -15th, 2026. Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. For more information and links visit the webpage.

XXX ARGENTINE CONGRESS OF SOIL SCIENCE. April 14th-17th, 2026. San Carlos de Bariloche, Argentina. For more information and links visit the webpage.

June

THE 23RD WORLD CONGRESS OF SOIL SCIENCE – Soil and the Shared Future for Humanity. 7th -12th June, 2026. Nanjing, China. For more information and links visit the webpage.

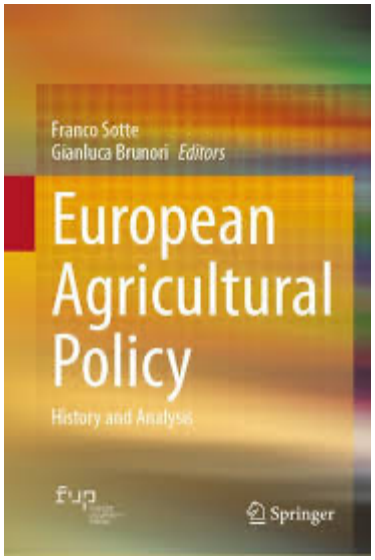
IFSA2026: FARMING AND AGRI-FOOD SYSTEMS DYNAMICS: FACING CRISES AND TRADE-OFFS IN TRANSITION PATHWAYS. June 29th – July 03rd, 2026. Montpellier, France. For more information and links visit the webpage.

August

12TH SCAR OPEN SCIENCE CONFERENCE & MEETINGS. August 10th –14th, 2026. Oslo, Norway. For more information and links visit the webpage.

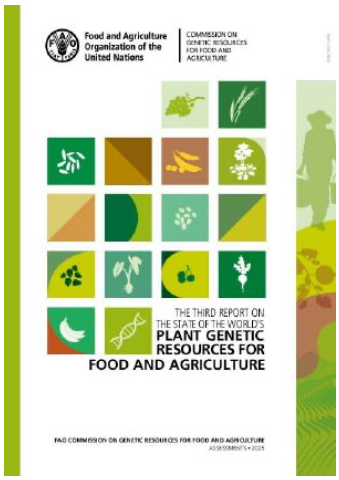
INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON EARTHWORM ECOLOGY (ISEE13) 13TH EDITION IN WAGENINGEN, THE NETHERLANDS. August 23rd-28th, 2026. Wageningen, the Netherlands. For more information and links visit the webpage.

⌘ New Books



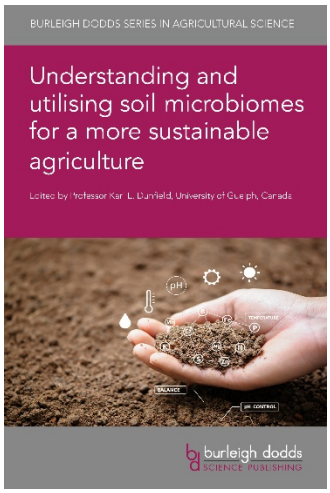
Editors: Franco Sotte, Gianluca Brunori.

This book presents the European Common Agricultural Policy by tracing its crucial stages from its conception to the present days. It reconstructs the negotiating processes that have taken place at the political and institutional level over the years. At the same time, the book brings together the results of analyses made by agricultural policy scholars to propose solutions, and to evaluate the policies adopted and the results they produced. The book takes on a twofold objective: to understand how many of today's problems have roots whose branches extend back in time, and to draw, from the lessons of history, useful insights for endowing the European Union with an ambitious agricultural and rural development policy, suited to the challenges ahead. For more information visit the webpage.



Editors: FAO Commission.

Plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) are the essence of sustainable agrifood systems. They encompass the genetic diversity in both improved and farmers' varieties, as well as in crop wild relatives, wild food plants and breeding materials. The third report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture presents a comprehensive assessment of the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA, as well as the human and institutional capacities to support these efforts. Based on information from 128 countries and four regional and 13 international research centres and the contribution from over 1 600 experts, it presents an overview of progress since 2012, as well as current needs and challenges in the future management of PGRFA. The report provides a sound basis for recalibrating relevant polices and strategies, including the rolling Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. For more information visit the webpage.



Editors: Kari E. Dunfield

In recent years, a new wave of research into understanding soil microbiomes has emerged, with stakeholders across the supply chain recognising the fundamental importance of these communities in optimising both crop and soil health. Despite these advancements, many soil microorganisms and their ecological functions remain only partially understood. This new book summarises the wealth of recent research in this important area. It reviews advances in techniques for analysing soil microorganisms, the composition and dynamics of soil microbial communities, the ecosystem services they support and how they can be enhanced. For more information visit the webpage.

ISTRO INFO is the newsletter of the **International Soil Tillage Research Organisation** (www.istro.org).

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