



The Malaysian Society of Soil Science Newsletter

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Anyone? No?

Dear colleagues,

Well, the first newsletter issue (01/2003) came and went without a peep from members. This is a surprise. I had expected at least some minor comments, but to date I have received absolutely none. This is contrary to a few criticisms MSSS has received about the long inactivity of the newsletter. Some members have wondered about the newsletter, asking "When is the next newsletter coming out?", "What happened to the newsletter? Is the editorial board asleep?", "Why wasn't I given the newsletter?", "Did I miss an issue?", "Is it because that I am now retired that I am not given an issue?", *etc.*, *etc.* I suppose our newsletters are such that they won't be missed once they are gone! Anyway, I am not worried; the newsletters will be issued faithfully every three months, having a main goal to inform and update members on MSSS' activities. I think this goal ultimately justifies our newsletter. I find the advice given by my school physics teacher many, many years ago very useful: "Silence means *total* agreement". Thus, no feedback from members means 100% newsletter-satisfaction!

Best wishes. Dr. C.B.S. Teh, *Editor*.

Tribute to Retired Society Members

The management committee has cancelled the special luncheon or dinner planned for all retired members. This is unfortunate but deemed necessary because of the large financial and logistics constraints. Please remember that MSSS is 32 years old and since then many, many members have retired. The logistics of identifying, tracking down and inviting each one of them (we do not dare to leave anyone out) is, well, frightening! Apologies for the hype then cancellation.

Lost & Found

The society's homepage (e-msss.com) disappeared from the World Wide Web momentarily from the end of September to mid-October. This was due to some mix-up from the company that hosts the MSSS website. They had recently changed their company name from "Pooi Net Sdn. Bhd." to "Masnoh Sdn. Bhd.", and it was during that transition that the MSSS term lapsed and was subsequently removed from the WWW. Nonetheless, after a few frantic phone calls, the situation was eventually rectified. The company regretted this confusion and has agreed to host the MSSS web site this year for free!

SOILS 2004: Call for Papers

The first announcement brochure for the Soil Science Conference of Malaysia 2004 (SOILS 2004) has been distributed to all members and interested parties. The conference will be held at Penang Island from 13-14 April 2004, and the post-conference tour will be at Medan, Indonesia from 15-17 April 2004.

The SOILS 2004 conference will give emphasis on topics such as land use planning, large-scale crop production and integration of plantation crops with livestock. Other relevant topics, however, will also be highlighted. Like all previous conferences, next year's conference will continue to provide an excellent platform for those who are involved in agriculture specifically the soil scientists, planters and agro-based entrepreneurs to present their new findings, exchange ideas and share experiences on various approaches on farming and soil management.

All are invited to submit scientific papers for oral and poster presentations. The dateline for the extended abstracts and full papers are 15 Dec 2003 and 15 Feb. 2004, respectively. The conference fee is RM 450, 500 and 150 for members, non-members and students, respectively. The post-conference tour fee has yet to be decided and will be announced later.

Assoc Prof. Dr. Mohd. Hanafi Musa (UPM) has replaced the busy Assoc. Prof. Dr. Siti Zauyah (UPM) as the chairperson for this conference. Members in the organising committee include Mr. Ismail Abu Bakar (MARDI), Dr. Halimi Mohd. Saud (UPM), Assoc. Prof. Dr. Anuar Rahim (UPM), Tuan Haji Hanifuddin Abd. Rahman (RISDA), Pn. Sariam Othman (MARDI), Dr. Amir Hamzah Ahmad Ghazali (USM), Mr. Amir Hamzah Yasak (Espek) and Dr. Zin Zawawi Zakaria (MPOB).

For further details and online registration, please go to: e-msss.com/soils2004.

New member

The management committee has approved the membership of Mr. Vijiandran a/l Juva Rajah; Division 1, Jendarata Estate, United Plantations Bhd., 36009 Teluk Intan, Perak.

Fellow

As agreed during the last AGM, there will be an additional membership status called Fellow. Some details concerning the criteria, appointment and rights of a Fellow were discussed in the last management committee meeting. Among them were:

1. Terms and Conditions of a Fellow:

Must be an ordinary member of MSSS for not less than 5 years

Have contribute extensively to the activities and progress of the Society

On being elected/appointed, a Fellow would continue getting the same right and privileges enjoyed by ordinary members

2. Right and Privileges of a Fellow should include:

A life-time appointment

No fee is imposed upon an elected/appointed Fellow

Would be invited to all MSSS activities/functions

3. The award can be withdrawn due to unethical conduct of the Fellow and/or defamatory to the Society.

4. Nomination of a Fellow should be made by an honorary member, a fellow or an ordinary member of the MSSS and approved by its management.

Malaysian Journal of Soil Science (MJSS)

The latest issue of MJSS (vol. 5, 2001) is ready and has been distributed to all the society members. This issue was published ahead of the so-called Special Issue of MJSS that will carry the selected papers that had been presented at the Soil Science Conference of Malaysia 2002 at Perlis. The MJSS Special issue will instead be published as vol. 6, and it is hoped (yes, hoped) that vol. 6 will be ready by the end of this year.

Apologies to all the contributing authors for this long delay. The journal is almost two years behind schedule, and it was recently agreed in one of the management committee meetings that this situation must be rectified quickly. It is really a Catch-22 situation: the journal can be published quickly if MJSS receives enough manuscript submissions, but potential contributors are reluctant to submit their papers due to the delay in seeing their papers being reviewed (not to mention to see it finally in print). Cost of production is also another factor, as it costs about RM 50 per book. The cost of production however is usually supported from the profits obtained from the annual soil science conferences.

For those interested to submit papers to MJSS, please contact the Chief Editor (mjss_editor@e-msss.com) or go to this web site for the Author Instructions: e-msss.com/mjss.

PETRONAS-MSSS International Urea Conference

The involvement of MSSS in the organisation of The International Urea Conference 2004 looks almost certain to be over. It seems that MITCO (Malaysian International Trading Corporation) has instead been asked by Petronas to organise the conference. Reasons for edging out MSSS are unclear and surreptitious. Nonetheless, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ahmad Husni Mohd Hanif (UPM) has been given the task to try to organise an international conference some time in 2004 or 2005. The last international conference organised by MSSS has been some years ago.

Soil Texture Software

Texture AutoLookup (TAL) is a Windows program to determine soil texture classes based on 13 soil classification schemes: USDA (U.S. Dept. of Agric.), UK (England and Wales), Canada, International, India, ISSS (Intl. Soil Sci. Soc.), Switzerland, INEAC (Inst. Nat. pour L'Etude Agron. du Congo), New Zealand, FAO (Food and Agric. Org.), AISNE (France), KA4 (Germany) and Shepard's (1954) proposed scheme. TAL also supports custom (user-defined) schemes, can handle large data sets, and has file I/O and charting capabilities. TAL is available *free* at: www.agri.upm.edu.my/~chris/tal.

Calendar

10th International Congress of Soil Science. 18-19 Mar. 2004. Sindh. Agricultural University Tandojam, Hyderabad, Pakistan. (Email: soilchem@fsd.paknet.com.pk).

SOILS 2004. Soil Science Conference of Malaysia 2004. 13-14 Apr. 2004. Penang Island. Post-conference tour of Medan, Indonesia. 15-17 Apr. 2004. (e-msss.com/soils2004)

Brownfield Asia 2004. International Conference on Remediation and Management of Contaminated Land: Focus on Asia. 8-10 June 2004. Kuala Lumpur. (Email: sec@iem.po.my)

Sustainable Agriculture on Tropical Steeplands. 14-18 June 2004. Merida, Venezuela. (www.cidiat.ing.ula.ve/sats2004)

13th Int. Soil Conservation Organization Conference, Conserving Soil and Water for Society: Sharing Solutions. 4-9 Jul. 2004. Brisbane, Australia. (www.icms.com.au/isco2004)

Agriculture Congress. Innovation Towards Modernized Agriculture". 4-7 Oct. 2004. Melaka. (www.agri.upm.edu.my/congress) ⊕