

Soil Awareness & Education

A review from Ireland

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Review soil education and awareness opportunities in Ireland

- Teagasc Scoping study: Soil Education in Ireland
 - no support materials or teacher guidelines available for the teaching of soil from the Dpt Education (www.education.ie) or from organisations such as TeachNet Ireland (www.teachnet.ie)
- Soil Science Society Ireland
 - keen to develop teaching materials – but no funding for distribution
- FarmNet web service
 - provides some information on environmental resources, but the soil component is relatively poor (http://www.teachnet.ie/farmnet/teacher/soil_factfiles.htm)



What do we have? - Education

- Education in schools
 - only exists as a very small part of the geography syllabus (and in Agricultural science in final year)
- Tertiary/College/Institutes of Technology
 - Green Certificate (Teagasc)
 - Environmental Sciences
- University level
 - No soil science degree taught
 - 3 Universities aspects/modules of soil science within other degree courses
- Post-graduate courses and research
 - All have soil related research at PhD and post-graduate level



What do we have? – Industry/Policy

- Farming community
 - Teagasc outreach (Open Days/Farm Walks)
- Consultancy/Local Council
 - Risk Assessment – Septic tanks/ brown field sites
 - Archaeology
- Dept Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
 - Cross Compliance
 - Link to JRC
- Environmental Protection Agency
 - Research funding opportunities
 - EIONET – soil spatial data provider
- Dept Environment
 - Soil Framework Directive?
 - Protection of peat (National Parks and Wildlife Service)
 - Archaeology



Which stakeholder groups are missing?

- Land Planning
 - No soil information considered in land planning
- National Parks
 - Poor understanding of the soil ecosystem
- Environmental Legislation
 - Nitrates Directive (whole country approach)
 - Kyoto (Tier 1 approach)
 - WFD (agricultural management planning based on nitrates directive)
 - Pending SFD (poor base information to work from)



Experience....



National Agricultural
Open Day (40,000)

National School
Science Week



University – Teaching



Soil Functions Awareness
– Regional Workshops

Ministerial Shadowing
(Defra, UK.)



Radio



British
Soil Science
Society



Summary - mandate

- To review current soil education and awareness programmes and their accessibility by the general public.
- To identify which stakeholder groups/ policy makers / age groups are not receiving suitable information, with a view to ensuring that soil quality and protection is achieved across Europe
- To develop a resource base of publicly available educational material (multi-lingual) on the role of soils in society.
- To coordinate, promote and provide support materials to soil awareness activities across Europe. For example, through communication and workshops with other networks (e.g. ENSA) and societies (National Soil Science Societies and Education Forums).
- To develop a European knowledge transfer project proposal for submission. E.g. cost action