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**OIL, TOIL AND SOIL:
An Introduction to the Symposium**

The machinery of human interaction is facilitated by several lubricants, of which coffee is one of the most important in our society. Morning coffee break in the Department of Soil Science at the University of Alberta collected the people who conceived this symposium. On a cold day in November 1982, F. D. Cook, W. B. McGill, S. Pawluk, J. A. Robertson (all of the Department of Soil Science), H. V. Danks (Biological Survey of Canada (Terrestrial Arthropods)), and I warmed our fingers on pottery mugs and discussed common interests about soil arthropods around the table. A brief prepared by the Biological Survey of Canada (1982) drew our attention to the unexplored possibilities of opening dialogue between soil zoologists and pedologists in Canada. It was apparent that our understanding of soil arthropods in Canada was deficient. However, it appeared that we might know more than it seemed possible, if we could bring together people working on soil biology from quite different perspectives. We surmised that such a colloquium could contribute to assessment of needs and identification of priorities for soil biology in Canada. These became central objectives for organizing a soil animal conference.

After the creative dizziness of conception comes the toil of pregnancy and the ever present possibility of abortion. This is the pedestrian but onerous phase of organizing a conference. In this task, F. D. Cook, S. Pawluk and I were joined by N. Juma (Department of Soil Science) and J. A. Campbell (Alberta Environment, Research Management Division). V. Behan-Pelletier (Biosystematics Research Institute) was an adjunct member of this committee and contributed valuable advice and enthusiasm throughout the planning phase.

It is well known that soil animals contribute to soil function through effects on litter breakdown and nutrient cycling. However, we felt that the effects of soil animals on soil structure were less widely appreciated and because of our collective interests, we decided to focus the symposium on these interactions. Our nebulous "soil animal conference" became "Faunal Influences on Soil Structure". G. E. Ball (Chairman, Department of Entomology) and W. B. McGill (Chairman, Department of Soil Science) provided strong continuing support for our efforts and the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry contributed seed money from the Endowment Fund for the Future.

As we developed the program, our concept of the symposium grew and we became most interested in attracting scholars of international reputation who might catalyse and contribute to the interaction between Canadian pedologists and soil biologists. At this point our squeaking wheels outran our budget and so we sought another important lubricant of human interaction - money. The response was generous and gratifying. We received financial support for the scientific program from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, Alberta Agriculture, Alberta Environment, The Alberta Research Council and the Canadian Society of Soil Science. Additional financial support from within the University community was provided by the Conference Fund Committee, Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry and the Departments of Entomology, Forest Science and Soil Science. The City of Edmonton and the Province of Alberta, respectively, agreed to host coffee breaks and the closing banquet with hospitality grants. We on the Organizing Committee are most grateful for this support.

The birth of this conference in June 1984 was more party than pain. About 80 participants representing ten countries arrived and three days of non-stop interaction followed. The prevailing spirit was that of a class reunion despite the fact that participants came from the two

rather isolated schools of soil zoology and pedology. It is a pleasure to acknowledge the assistance of H. van Blodeau and the staff at Lister Hall who arranged a pleasant and relaxed environment for the conference. S. Greenberg and V. Smyth of the Faculty of Extension organized and manned the registration desk assisted by several student volunteers.

The following collection of papers that were formally delivered at "Faunal Influences on Soil Structure" is but a pale reflection of what actually transpired. The Hon. F. D. Bradley (Minister of the Environment, Province of Alberta) and J. Gordin Kaplan (Vice-President (Research), University of Alberta) opened the conference by stressing the great potential significance of soil research in the contexts of agriculture and land management. The formal papers published or abstracted in this collection served as a starting point for the flurry of intellectual exchange that characterized the meeting. Many participants contributed posters summarizing their current work about animals in the soil. These and the workshop sessions were in a sense the heart of the conference and maintained a strong pulse of enthusiastic discussion.

It is our hope and belief that the record of this conference shall not end at the last page of this volume. Instead, we predict that a growing dialogue between pedologists and soil zoologists will lead to a new, more synthetic kind of soil science that includes soil biology at its core. There is much toil ahead but it should pay off handsomely in terms of applications and by increasing understanding of a fascinating part of the earth's biota. A central message of this conference is that these two objectives must travel hand in hand.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the help and support of G. E. Ball who, in the capacity of editor of *Quaestiones Entomologicae* encouraged us to put this issue together and bore with us through the most difficult aspect of this project. We also thank S. M. Subbarao, publication manager for the journal, for her patience. Publication of these proceedings was made possible by support from the Endowment Fund for the Future of the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry at the University of Alberta.

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