Science Societies

Science on call

By Ole Wendroth

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Ole Wendroth

The current pandemic has thoroughly turned over our lives and our nation's economy and is affecting people all over the world. On the other hand, it has also shed new light on the relevance of science. Never before was the close cooperation between governments and experts in the sciences so important. The public could witness how much our future depends on their knowledge and how important their warnings are. Politicians have to be extremely responsive and take their recommendations into account on a day-to-day basis. The public has been willing to quickly adjust for its own benefit and that of others. In this situation, scientific input in political decisions, expert knowledge, and creativity has become mandatory. They need to be fueled by excellent research and education that stimulate discoveries.

Now is the time for soil scientists to be evocative and emphasize the consequences of continuing the procrastination of effective measures that serve the environment. Feeding the world's population is not simply done by declaring the race open for higher yield goals. There will be no quick fix for polluted water and degraded soils. Our battle for managing the land more wisely and using our resources in more responsive ways than we do currently gains new speed: The current pandemic shows how quickly effective policies can be established and how fast the public is willing to change its behavior after becoming aware of the problem and hearing scientists present strategies and actions for solutions. Our creativity and compassion for science, our

research on better understanding of agro-ecosystems and managing the environment, and our education of the next generation of scientists and responsible, cognitive individuals in a better-informed society are on call.

Exchanging Scientific Knowledge this Fall

For us as SSSA members, learning from each other and from colleagues in other areas through vibrant interaction is essential. To exchange knowledge, we hold an Annual Meeting with our two sister societies and with others. One big question on our minds is currently: How will we convene for this year's meeting, which is planned to be held in Phoenix this fall? Of course, we prefer our traditional format of an in-person conference. Whether that will be possible, or safety concerns dictate other ways to meet, is being thoroughly investigated by our three Societies' Annual Meetings Planning Committee (ACS732).

Members of this committee and many others are currently carefully considering various choices and will share the result of this discussion with our members as soon as possible. Regardless how we will meet, exchanging our scientific ideas and results will remain as important as always. Through our interaction, we will stimulate each other to create solutions based on discoveries for increasing the public awareness and to help make the right decisions for sustainably managing the environment and for producing abundant, healthy food.

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