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Discussion papers

The "*Discussion papers*" in *Geoderma* were initiated by Prof. Johan Bouma in 1993. In the Editorial preceding the first discussion paper J. Bouma and J.A. McKeague explained the aims and setup, as follows: "The aim of the papers is to stimulate and focus discussions in areas of major concern in soil science. There are already several conduits for review papers in soil science literature. Avoiding duplication, we have, therefore, a different aim with our discussion papers. Based on suggestions from the readers, members of the Editorial Board and ideas of the editors, acknowledged experts in particular areas of soil science will be invited by the editors to write a Discussion paper on a particular topic. Emphasis will be on areas of major concern but also, and particularly, on new approaches and visions. After review, the paper will be sent to at least three experts for comments, to be published together with the text of the discussion paper. Finally, the author has an opportunity for the last word."

So far *Geoderma* has published eight Discussion papers on a wide range of topics (Table 1) — most were edited by Prof. Alex McBratney. Despite the fact that these papers are reasonably well-cited, in recent years no Discussion papers have been published.

In this issue of *Geoderma*, the ninth Discussion paper is presented. It was written by J.J. Schröder and J.J. Neeteson who are staff members of Plant Research International in Wageningen, the Netherlands. Both have a long-term experience and interest in nutrient management in the Netherlands, and were in an excellent position to write this paper. Responses to the paper were written by L.A. Schipper from Waikato University, New Zealand, K.W.T. Goulding and A.P Whitmore from Rothamsted Research in the UK, J. Bouma, previously with Wageningen University and Research Centre, D. Sacco and M. Bassanino from the University of Torino in Italy, and J.C. Fardeau from INRA,

Table 1
Discussion papers in *Geoderma*

Year	Author(s)	Title of Discussion paper	Discussants	Published	Number of citations[a]
1993	N. van Breemen	Soils as biotic construct favouring net primary productivity	J.E. Lovelock; L.P. Wilding and E.F. Kelly; F. Stuart Chapin	Vol 57: 183–211	51
1995	F.N. Muchena, R.M. Kiome	The role of soil science in agricultural development in East Africa	R. Lal; P.L.G. Vlek; L.O. Fresco	Vol. 67: 141–157	6
1996	D.G. Rossiter	A theoretical framework for land evaluation	J. Bouma; P.A. Burrough; J.J. de Gruijter; E. van Ranst; A.K.L. Johnson; A.B. McBratney	Vol. 72: 165–190	27
1997	J. Bouma	The role of quantitative approaches in soil science when interacting with stakeholders	A. Ruellan, G.B.M. Heuvelink, R.B. Brown, B.J. Culley, R.E. White	Vol. 78: 1–12	13
1997	D.J. Brus, J.J. de Gruijter	Random sampling or geostatistical modelling? Choosing between design-based and model-based sampling strategies for soil	G.M. Laslett; G.B.M. Heuvelink; N. Cressie; N Scott Urquhart; R. Webster and A.B. McBratney	Vol. 80: 1–44	49
1998	J.J. Ibáñez, S. De-Alba, A. Lobo, V Zucarello	Pedodiversity and global patterns at coarse scales	D.H. Yaalon; L.P. Wilding and L.C. Nordt; G.M. Hudson; M. van Meirvenne; I.O.A. Odeh; M.J. Vepraskas	Vol. 83: 171–192	28
1998	J.D. Phillips	On the relations between complex systems and the factorial model of soil formation	R.J. Huggett; R. Amundson; M.R. Hoosbeek; Y. Pachepsky; I. Rhyzova; Yu.N. Blagoveshchensky and V.P. Samsonova; G.S. Humphreys and T.R. Payton	Vol. 86: 1–21	19
2000	G.W. Horgan, I.M. Young	An empirical stochastic model for the geometry of two-dimensional crack growth in soil	C.J. Moran and J.M. Kirkby; D. Stoyan; H-J. Vogel; B. Velde; C.E. Mullins; P.A.C. Raats,	Vol. 96: 263–276	8
2008	J.J. Schröder, J.J. Neeteson	Nutrient management regulations in The Netherlands	L.A. Schipper; K.W.T. Goulding and A.P Whitmore; J. Bouma; D. Sacco and M. Bassanino; J.C. Fardeau	This volume	

[a] As checked on 28th November 2007 in the ISI database.

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France. A final response was written by J.J. Schröder and J.J. Neeteson.

The paper and responses address an important issue that occurs in many countries in both the developed and developing world. It also forms an excellent example of how soil science can contribute to environmental issues. We hope that this Discussion paper will make contributions towards creating solutions in all parts of the world where the voluntary approach is replaced by regulatory measures to maintain and improve the environment whilst producing our much needed daily food, fuel and fiber.

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