Van der Ploeg Wins Soil Physics Early Career Award

Dr. Martine van der Ploeg, assistant professor in the Department of Environmental Sciences at Wageningen University, the Netherlands, was recently awarded the SSSA Soil Physics Division Early Career Award. This award recognizes scientists who have made outstanding contributions in soil physics within six years of completing their Ph.D. degree. Applicants must be active members of SSSA, provide evidence of quality teaching (if in a teaching position) and effectiveness in extension and/or outreach activities, contribute original basic and/or applied research in soil physics, and participate in public, professional, and institutional domains.

Martine’s research demonstrates her originality and versatility as it covers a broad research area ranging from subpermafrost environments to monitoring systems. In her Ph.D., she successfully combined polymer chemistry, ceramic technology, and soil physics into a system that could measure water potentials beyond wilting point—a goal long seen as a holy grail in soil physics—and in subsequent research applied this technology in ecogenomics and plant physiology research.

In her teaching, Martine mobilizes students to apply topical content to formulate sustainable solutions for future challenges (food, water, and climate). She teaches in both the regular program at Wageningen University and in the B.Sc. Honours Programme.

Martine has an impressive service record as well. She chairs the Vadose Zone subdivision of EGU and has co-initiated the global network on Groundwater@Global Palaeoclimate Signals and is the European coordinator of this collaboration. In 2014, she became a board member of the Dutch Scientific Hydrology Center Boussinesq. She co-founded a non-profit to find innovative ways to communicate and interact with society.

Awards

Van der Ploeg Wins Soil Physics Early Career Award

The Auburn soil judging team (from left to right): Coach Joey Shaw, Joe Taylor (5th place individual), Assistant Coach Lauren James, Danielle Tadych (9th place individual), Bryan Trammell, Kristen Pegues (3rd place individual), Abigail Johnston, Grace Lowery, Jenna Platt (6th place individual), and Assistant Coach Cassi Savage.

Introvert continued from page 46

Your strengths. The world needs both introverts and extroverts. One of the best analogies I have heard to highlight this point goes like this: imagine an introvert and an extrovert shooting a bow and arrow. The introverts would spend so much time adjusting the sights, changing angles, adjusting the tension, choosing the right arrow, etc. that they’d never actually release the trigger and the extroverts would just be shooting arrows left and right, without ever hitting the target. The world needs both types: one to align the arrow, and one to pull the trigger.

For further reading on how to make the most of your strengths as an introvert, I highly recommend Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can’t Stop Talking by Susan Cain. Good luck!

A. Wright, CCA and member of the Early Career Members Committee

Soil Judging continued from page 46

8. Mandy Millard (Tennessee Technological University)
9. Danielle Tadych (Auburn University)
10. Amanda Connor (University of Georgia)

This year’s event was sponsored by Clemson University Creative inquiry and Undergraduate Research Team, which adapts soil judging to other countries (e.g., Cameroon, China, and Venezuela).