



PRESS RELEASE

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RASE's "Practice with Science" Group focuses on soil and water

Soil and water management/engineering is the focus of a new report for the RASE's "Practice with Science" Group, chaired by Sir Don Curry.

Professor Dick Godwin is preparing the report, which will be launched in the autumn and will seek to answer the following questions:-

How can British farmers practically and effectively manage and improve their soil?
How can they increase yields whilst at the same time improving the environment?
Does the agricultural industry have the research capability and sufficient soil scientists to support farmers in their endeavours?

"The RASE is focussing on soil because it is such a precious, sometimes overlooked resource" said Practice with Science Group Chair Sir Don Curry. "The demands which we will be making on our soil over the next 30-50 years will be enormously challenging, with the need for significantly increased food production alongside environmental improvement".

The report will focus on three key areas, namely research, education and practical activity by farmers.

Given a background of cuts in research and development, it will seek to identify if the UK's soil and water management research capability is 'fit for purpose' and whether it can help the agricultural industry to meet the challenges of increasing output whilst reducing dependence on agro-chemicals and pesticides and at the same time improving the environment.

It will also consider whether sufficient people are being attracted to soil and water management as a career, whether they are staying within the UK industry and indeed, whether there remains the capacity to train them.

In addition the report will also ascertain what information farmers receive about 'best practice' in soil and water management and whether this is implemented on farms.

Following the report's publication, the Society will seek to implement its recommendations at both a policy and practical level and work with partners in the industry in order to achieve this.

The report is being supported by the Felix Thornley Cobbold Agricultural Trust, which has provided a grant towards its preparation and publication.

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Notes to Editors:-

1. Press release issued by Julie Bublaitis, Marketing Assistant, Royal Show
Tel No: 02476 858 217 Email: julieb@rase.org.uk
2. The Royal Agricultural Society of England, play a leading role in the development of British agriculture and a vibrant rural economy through the uptake of good science and the promotion of best practice. www.rase.org.uk
3. The purpose of the “Practice with Science” Group is to advise on year-round activity relating to the Royal Agricultural Society of England’s objective “to be the leading independent voice for agriculture and the rural economy, based upon its commitment to “Practice with Science”.
4. Professor Dick Godwin holds Emeritus, Honorary and Visiting Professorships in agricultural engineering from Cranfield University, Czech University of Life Sciences and Harper Adams University Colleges respectively. He is an internationally recognised researcher and educator in the field of agricultural soil mechanics, soil and waste management and precision agriculture. He is being assisted with the report by Brian Finney CBE, Dr Bryan Davies, Professor Gordon Spoor and Dr Mike Hann.