



SoilCare Inc AGM – 16 November 2011

Year-end report 2011

Since the SoilCare Inc Annual General Meeting in November 2010 the membership has increased from 176 to 207 family memberships.

I believe the growth in membership is a reflection of the commitment and effort by the SoilCare Executive Committee to provide relevant and useful events, educational opportunities and support to the membership as well as the greater farming community.

Our partnerships with North Coast TAFE at Wollongbar and Environmental Analysis Labs at Southern Cross University also provide us substantial opportunities to support our membership.

I would like to thank the members of the Executive Committee, Alan Coates, Pam Woods, and Tony Walker for their continued effort and personal commitment to SoilCare. In particular, I would like to express my appreciation to SoilCare Secretary, Pam Woods, who spends many hours facilitating SoilCare and PestWeb projects. I must also express my appreciation to SoilCare Treasurer, Tony Walker, for his efficient book-keeping skills and his on-time reporting.

I would like to also thank the Events Sub-Committee members for their many volunteer hours spent to plan and execute the SoilCare events. The Sub-Committee members, Maurice Collins, Janet Durham, Abigail Jenkins, Debra Lewis, Kieran Livermore, Kate Thompson, Phil McCarthy, Kerrie O'Neill, Nick Petroff, Leigh Shearman, Sue Wiley and Pam Woods are now in the midst of planning the next SoilCare Expo scheduled for 10 March 2012.

I would like to extend a thank-you to Sue Wiley who has served the past year as Membership Secretary.

A very sincere thank you to our TAFE partners for facilitating our activities. In particular I would like to thank the agricultural staff members at Wollongbar TAFE: Phil Harvey, Paul Moosberger, Alan Coates and Dave Forrest.

NSW Department of Primary Industries has been very supportive in providing great venues and media equipment.

In 2011 we completed the second year and started the third year of our Australian Government's Caring for Our Country three-year project. This project has been the focus for the year and funded most of the SoilCare activities for 2011. We are very grateful to the Australian Government for their support to our organisation and also the recognition that sustainable agriculture an important issue.

Activities since the 2010 SoilCare AGM

December 2010

- 16 December – Biochar research update with Dr Lukas Van Zwieten

March 2011

- 3 March – Biological Farming Safari to visit ground cover projects on 4 farms



- 4 March - Managing Insect Pests with Natural Enemies - Dr Linda Thomson
- 15 March - Biochar Seminar with Professor Stephen Joseph
- 24 March – Product Presentation Night - SAFE

April 2011 9 April – Product Presentation Demonstration – Fischer under tree mowers



- 28 April – Product Presentation Night – Soil Foodweb Institute

May 2011

- 20 May – PestWeb workshop – Pest Suppressive Landscapes, Dr Nancy Schellhorn
- 25 May – Product Presentation Night – Tryton Organics

June 2011

- 30 June – Product Presentation Night – Munash

July 2011

- 21 July – Bio-control for Fruit Spotting Bug? – Richard Llewellyn



Audience for Richard's bio control for FSB presentation.

- 22 July – PestWeb Lace Bug Workshop with Alan Coates

August 2011

- 26 August – Monitoring with Sex Pheromones – Dr Richard Vickers

September 2011

- 23 September – Green ants (*Oecophylla*) as a key element in integrated pest management (IPM) programs for mango, cashew and African mahogany crops in the Northern Territory – Dr Renkang Peng

October 2011

- 15 October – PestWeb workshop for new PestWeb members
- October 12 – SoilCare/CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY TAFE Biological Farming for grazing and cropping with Dave Forrest at Casino TAFE

November 2010

- 16 November - SoilCare AGM
- 27 November – Open Day at 'Wilson River Pecans'.



Geoff Bugden welcomes visitors to 'Wilson River Pecans' open day.

29 November – Self Drive Safari to visit Tryton Organics and soil health projects at SoilCare member farms, Thebian Farms (Beth and Ian Hotson) and Kahawa Coffee Plantation (Wendy and Jos Webber)



Kahawa Coffee Plantation farm walk

Other SoilCare Inc Activities

Caring for Our Country

In 2011 we completed the second year and started the third year of our Australian Government's Caring for Our Country three-year project.

This CFOC project funded most of the workshops listed above as well as:

1. Caring for Our Country Biological Farming TAFE Courses

- Feb to July 2011 – Grafton
- Feb to July 2011 – Wollongbar
- April to July 2011 – Wollongbar - avocado growers
- July to October 2011 – Wollongbar - banana growers
- July to December 2011 - Wollongbar – all crops
- October to December 2011 – Casino – grazing and cropping



Avocado growers receive PestWeb training.

2. Caring for Our Country Focus Groups (TAFE facilitated)

- Biological Farming and PestWeb (IPM) - Macadamia Growers
- Biological Farming and PestWeb (IPM) - Avocado Growers

3. Caring for Our Country

- **PestWeb meetings**
- **PestWeb on ground trials for monitoring protocols**

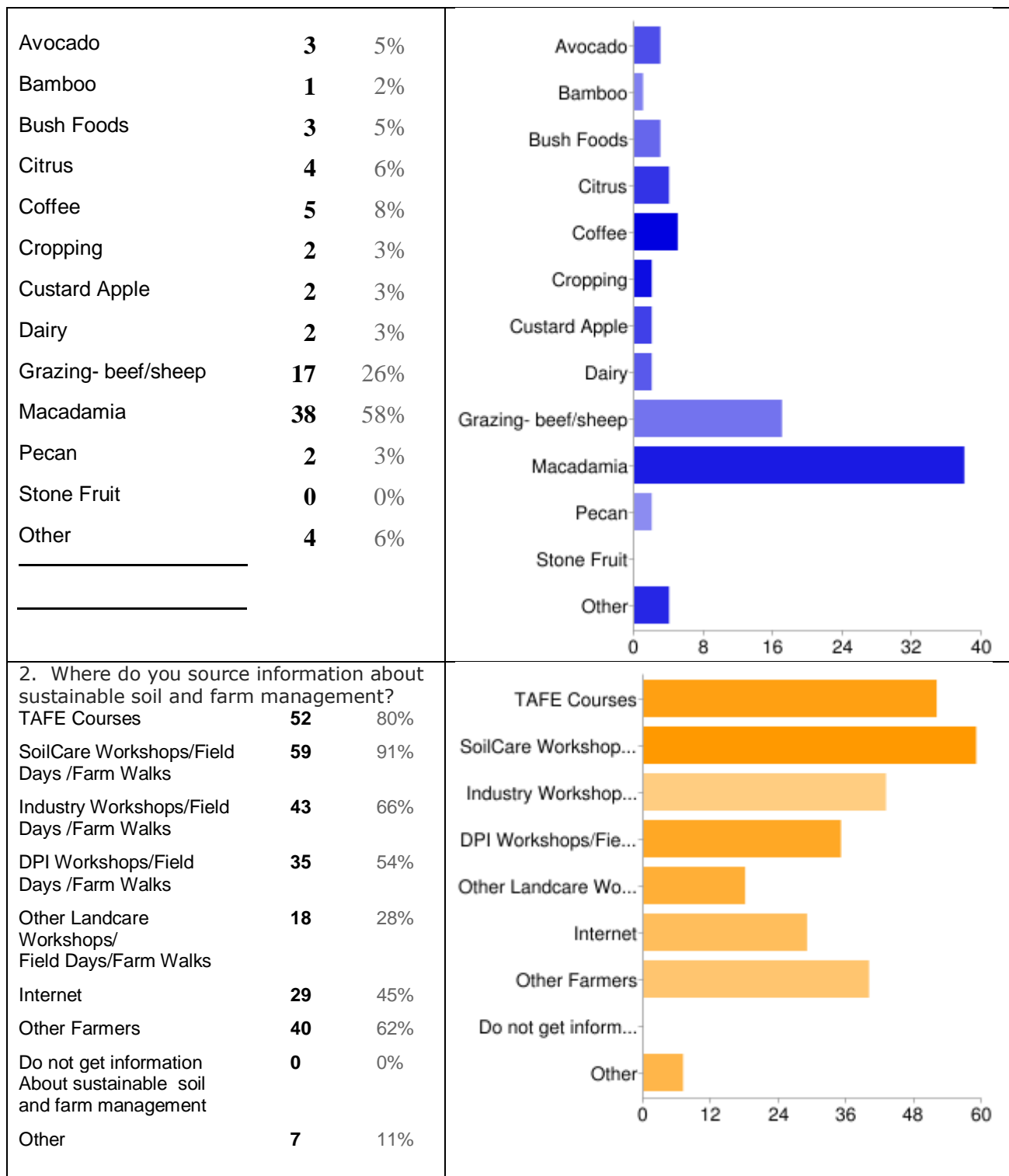
Submitted by **Bonnie Walker**
Chairperson, **SoilCare Inc**
16 November 2011



SoilCare member survey summary follows:

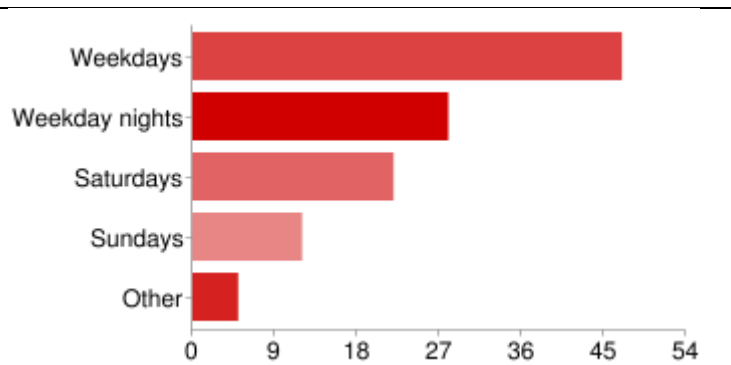
In November 2011 we requested members to complete a survey questionnaire to assist the Events Sub-Committee in planning events for 2012. Thank you to the 65 members who took the time to answer the questions. A summary of the results follows.

1. Please indicate the industry or industries in which you participate. People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.



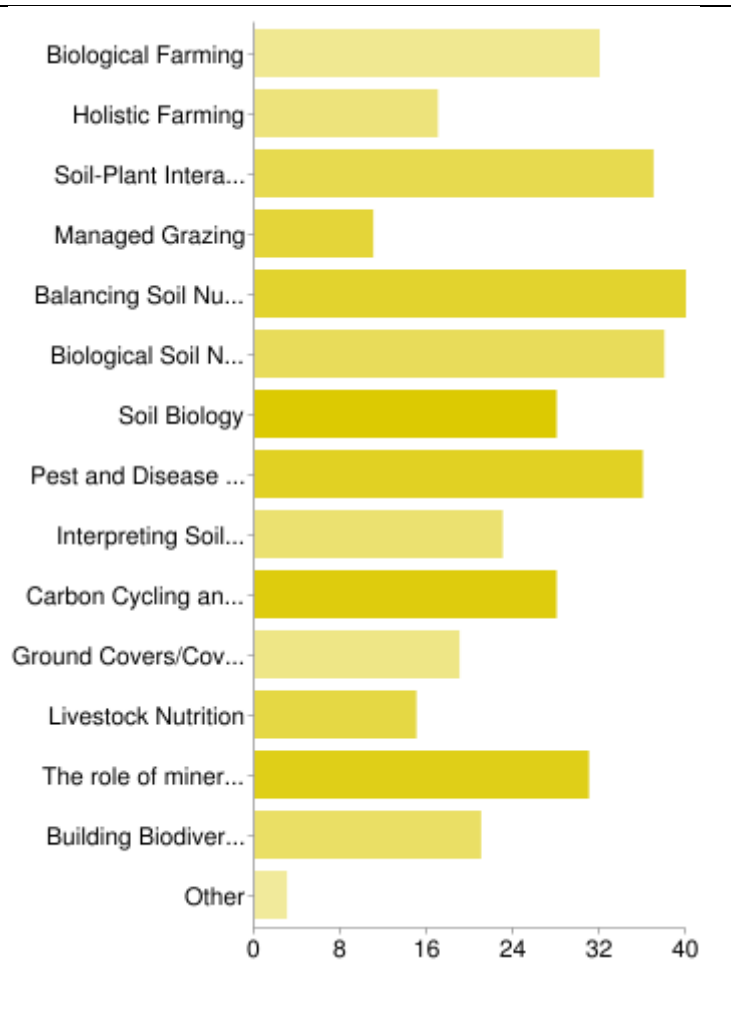
3. When is the most convenient time for you to attend workshops, courses, field days or seminars?

Weekdays	47	73%
Weekday nights	28	44%
Saturdays	22	34%
Sundays	12	19%
Other	5	8%



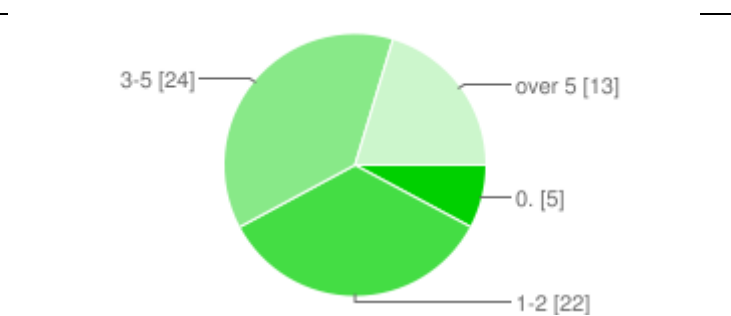
4. Tell us the topics you would like to learn more about during 2012.

Biological Farming	32	49%
Holistic Farming	17	26%
Soil-Plant Interactions	37	57%
Managed Grazing	11	17%
Balancing Soil Nutrients	40	62%
Biological Soil Nutrition	38	58%
Soil Biology	28	43%
Pest & Disease Management / Biological Farming Practice	36	55%
Interpreting Soil Tests	23	35%
Carbon Cycling and Carbon Building	28	43%
Ground Covers/Cover Cropping	19	29%
Livestock Nutrition	15	23%
The role of minerals in plant health	31	48%
Building Biodiversity	21	32%
Other	3	5%



5. How many SoilCare events, courses, workshops or meetings have you attended in the past year?

0.	5	8%
1-2	22	34%
3-5	24	37%
over 5	13	20%



6. Give us your 'Christmas List' of presenters and speakers.

Alan Coates

Dave Forrest

Arden Andersen

Neil Kinsey

Gerry Brunetti

Gary Zimmer

Peter Andrews

Rob Bauer

The Wilsons

Elaine Ingham

Simon Leake

Martin Ryder

Luke Bowman

David Murphy

Bob Shaffer

Judi Earl

Graeme Sait

Greg Chappell

Christine Jones

Eugene Gras

7. List your greatest limitations and weaknesses to achieving optimal soil health. We received many responses to this question but to summarise we would simply list:

Time

Money

Knowledge/Ignorance

Steep land

Weather/Climate

Cost of farm labour

Poor crop returns

Lack of advisors for biological farming practices instead of chemical inputs.

Economics – return on investment

Stock pressure

Some of the above names were listed more than numerous times.