

**A SPECIAL ISSUE IS FORTHCOMING**

Dear Colleague,

The paper by Tans, Fung and Takahashi (1990) "Observational Constraints on the Global Atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> Budget" *Science* 247: 1431, raised considerable interest in the possibility that an anthropogenically induced stimulation of carbon storage in soils has occurred. No other reservoir appears to be capable of storing the so-called "missing sink" carbon. If so, then it is essential not only that the cause for this stimulation be found, but also that models be developed which would permit the evolution of its storage capacity to be predicted.

One set of parameters in any such model is the ratio of turnover of carbon in various soil pools. Radiocarbon measurements offer an important constraint in their regard. Of course, even though the wide spectrum of turnover times and the separate contributions of natural and bomb-testing radiocarbon complicate the use of this constraint for the longer time-constant pools, it is all we have. Presumably, this renewed interest in the soil reservoir will lead to a host of new soil measurements. The availability of AMS facilities for radiocarbon measurements makes the task much easier in the sense that a variety of fractions can now be analyzed in any given soil sample.

In expectation of this renaissance, it is appropriate that a summary of existing measurements on contemporary soil organics be made available. Thus, we propose that an issue of *RADIOCARBON* be devoted to a listing of radiocarbon measurements on contemporary soil organics and to commentary on the interpretation of such measurements. To do this, we need the help of all those who have made such measurements. So please copy and fill out the form on the reverse side of this page and send it to Renee.

Cheers,

Wally Broecker  
Renee Kra

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