



SOIL FOODWEB New Zealand

Soil Rehab Specialists Since 1986

For Consultants and Rural Supply Retail Personal: A Basic Understanding of the Soil Foodweb and Interpretation of SFI NZ Report.

(Workshop Duration: 3 hours)

A healthy soil, far from being an inert medium, is a complex and dynamic system that is teeming with life. A large percentage of organisms that reside within healthy systems are beneficial micro-organisms such as fungi, bacteria, protozoa and nematodes. While seemingly insignificant they are represented in their millions each type providing a range of important services that promote plant growth, plant health and vigour.

The collective term for all of these organisms is the 'soil food web'. The interactions between these organisms can provide plant with many of the requirements that they need to survive and flourish including nutrient availability & retention, disease suppression and the building of soil structure. However, to date soil biology is an aspect that has largely been over looked since the adoption of quick fix solutions such as artificial fertiliser and chemical pesticides. The use of chemicals to kill pathogens and pests also destroys the beneficial organisms in the soil. The result is the creation of an environment conducive to further disease and nutrient deficiencies because the natural soil processes have been destroyed. The soil is a living system that needs to be managed. A balanced and healthy soil food web will suppress disease, cycle nutrient and improve aggregation meaning that fertiliser, pesticides and water can be substantially reduced.

This workshop will give participants an introduction to how all the above effects their business.

- Supply a basic understanding of the soil food web.
- Describe who eats who, biologically speaking, and why understanding plant succession is so important
- Give a brief explanation on what effects various farm inputs can have on the biota and how to protect/buffer them.
- Provide the consultant/retail personal with the tools they need to ensure they supply the farmer with the most effective product to maximise a microbiological production system.
- In depth interpretation of the Soil Foodweb Report.
- How to convert the data to what is happening on the farm.
- How to act on the results.