

Report

SME 2015 – 6th Swiss Microbial Ecology Meeting

10-12 of September, 2015 at Monte Verità, Ascona, Switzerland

The Swiss Microbial Ecology meetings are biannual gatherings of the Swiss Microbial Ecology community. The meetings bring together senior scientist and early career researchers working in Switzerland. We focus on giving young researchers in this field an opportunity to present their work, discuss it with colleagues, and to extend their network among the Swiss Microbial Ecologists and beyond. It is a key event to foster contacts between the different groups that are active in this field in Switzerland. Invited speakers, both national and international, provide in-depth looks at cutting edge research projects and bring new ideas and different perspectives to each meeting.

The total number of attendants of SME 2015 was 81, including 6 invited speakers. We obtained a good gender balance (45.7% female) among participants and a good participation of PhD students (56%). Most participants stayed at the Monte Verità conference hotel which also housed the lecture room and poster hall, resulting in a tight, highly interactive meeting.

The scientific program consisted of 35 talks (invited and contributed) organized into 5 sessions and 31 posters were presented in two poster sessions (see conference program for details). 15 participants attended with no presentations – SME traditionally attracts a number of senior scientists from Switzerland who attend and interact with the junior scientists, but do not give presentations themselves. We were able to attract a set of renowned invited speakers: Julia Vorholt, ETH Zurich, Switzerland; Tom Curtis, Newcastle University, UK; Christian Kost, MPI Jena, Germany; Eberhard Morgenroth, ETH Zurich/Eawag, Switzerland; Dani Or, ETH Zurich, Switzerland; Kornelia Smalla, Julius Kühn-Institut Federal Research Centre for Cultivated Crops, Germany. Unfortunately invited speaker Nicole Dubilier, Max Planck Institute for Marine Microbiology, Germany had to cancel short term and was replaced by Roman Stocker (ETH Zürich). A poster prize (sponsored through the ISME ambassador program) was awarded after review of the posters by a panel organized by Christof Holliger. The prize for the winning Poster "*Pore scale segregation of microbial populations under oxygen and nutrient gradients*" by Benedict Borer, O. Ilie, R. Tecon and D. Or was awarded at the conclusion of the conference.

As organizers we were very pleased with the conference, and the feedback we received from the attendants and from invited speakers was likewise very positive. The meeting provided a great look at the vibrant microbial ecology research community in Switzerland, and a great opportunity to meet some leading national and international scientists in a very personal setting. The meeting provided ample opportunity for scientific discussions and social exchange at joint coffee breaks, meals, and drinks.

The contribution of ISME was pointed out in writing and by displaying your logo on the conference website (<http://sme2015.ch/>), in the program, and at the conference itself. The ISME amabassador also introduced the society at the meeting.

The contribution by ISME was used to reduce the cost of attendance for the student attendants (CHF 180 per student versus CHF 250 for full registration) and to help defray reimbursement costs of invited speakers.

Impressions from SME 2015:

