ISO-TOPICS: THE FIRMS NETWORK NEWSLETTER

October 2019

ABOUT US
The Forensic Isotope Ratio Mass Spectrometry (FIRMS) Network was founded to develop the scope of stable isotope techniques in forensic applications.

FIRMS brings together chemists, physicists, materials scientists, and life scientists who employ isotopic analysis in their respective fields. FIRMS is helping to focus collective knowledge and expertise on improving methods for crime detection and reduction.

See more photos from the 7th FIRMS Network Conference by visiting the FIRMS website.

WELCOME
Welcome to the FIRMS October 2019 newsletter.

DISCLAIMER
Reference to or mention of any commercial product or process by specific trademark or manufacturer within this newsletter does not necessarily represent an endorsement by the FIRMS Network.

CONFERENCE RECAP
The 7th FIRMS Network Conference was held 16 to 19 September at the Fondazione Edmund Mach (FEM) in San Michele all’Adige, Italy. Monday included workshops for a packed house on (1) good practice in IRMS analysis, with presentations from Rebecca Kraft and Phil Dunn; and (2) isoscapes, with presentations from Jason West, Stefano Larsen, and Gabe Bowen. An evening icebreaker was held at FEM’s winery.
Thank you to everyone who attend the 7th FIRMS Network Conference! We enjoyed seeing you in Italy.

Dr Jason West from Texas A&M University provided the plenary lecture Tuesday morning to open the meeting. Oral presentations covered a variety of topics, including isoscapes, origin/traceability, human remains, food, quality control (QC), methods, drugs, and the environment. A copy of the conference program and the abstract booklet can be downloaded from the FIRMS website.

Poster presentations on Tuesday evening took place in conjunction with a reception. Attendees had a chance to visit the isotope laboratory at FEM on Wednesday; the tour was led by Dr Federica Camin. The conference dinner was held Wednesday evening at Rotari and included a tour of the facility. The meeting ended Thursday at lunchtime.

Special thanks are due to FIRMS Members Federica Camin and Luana Bontempo; their efforts preceding and during the meeting ensured it was a success. Refreshments—including coffee breaks, lunches, the poster reception, and conference dinner—would not have been possible without the support of sponsors, including Elementar, Picarro, ThermoFisher Scientific, AMETEK, Nu Instruments, Santis Analytical Italia, and Sercon.

Additional photos from the conference are available on the FIRMS website. Please feel free to submit your own photos by contacting us via email.

UPDATES FROM THE STEERING GROUP

Don’t forget that attendees of the 7th FIRMS Network Conference who have not previously participated in the FIRMS Proficiency Test Scheme, but would like to, can get 25% off the fee for the next round of analyses. Please contact firms@forensic-isotopes.org if you would like to take advantage of this offer.

Reminder: New participants in the FIRMS Proficiency Test Scheme may be eligible for a 25% savings!

Members will have an opportunity to publish presentations from the conference in an upcoming special issue of the journal Forensic Chemistry. Details are coming soon on the submission process and deadlines. Please write to register your interest in contributing to the special issue. We look forward to seeing your submission.

NEWS AND NOTICES

The IUPAC Periodic Table of the Elements and Isotopes Project has published a series of online resources at https://www.isotopesmatter.com to answer the questions “What are isotopes, and why do I need to know about them?”

The IAEA is now selling GRESP (Greenland Summit Precipitation). This reference material can be used in lieu of GISP, which is out of stock. For more information, please visit nucleus.iaea.org.

A recent query on the listserve ISOGEOCHEM highlighted some tools for isotope data management being developed by the Kopf Lab at the University of Colorado, Boulder. Dubbed “isoverse,” the tools may be of interest to FIRMS members. More details are available here: https://www.kopflab.org/isoverse/

The International Symposium on Isotope Hydrology took place 20-24 May 2019 in Vienna, Austria. The event was live streamed and archived videos are now available: http://streaming.iaea.org/21084

The American Geophysical Union (AGU) celebrates its centennial year at the AGU Fall Meeting 2019, which returns to San Francisco from 9 to 13 December. The program has been published and includes many presentations featuring isotopes.
Isotope symposia have been organized for the 2020 annual scientific meetings of both the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS), which takes place in February (Anaheim, CA), and the American Association of Physical Anthropologists (AAPA), which takes place in April (Los Angeles, CA). Presentations in the symposia will focus on applications of forensic isotope analysis to human remains.

The abstract submission period for the next International Conference on Applications in Isotope Ecology (IsoEcol) is planned to open in October 2019. The meeting will take place in Gaming, Austria from 31 May to 6 June 2020.

Dates are now decided for the 2020 Joint European Stable Isotope Users Group Meeting (JESIUM). The meeting will take place 4-9 October in Kuopio, Finland.

HIGHLIGHTED PUBLICATIONS

In conjunction with the launch of isotopesmatter.com, Chemistry International published the article “Isotopes Matter,” which describes a new digital interactive version of the IUPAC Periodic Table of the Elements and Isotopes: https://doi.org/10.1515/ci-2019-0107.

Working with NIST, researchers have developed and certified two new reference materials for lead isotope amount ratios and lead isotopic composition. Details of the work were published in Geostandards and Geoanalytical Research: https://doi.org/10.1111/ggr.12253.

PUBLICATIONS LIST

Disclaimer: This section contains a non-comprehensive list of recent publications that may be of interest to members. Inclusion does not necessarily mean that the FIRMS Network approves the content. You are encouraged to consider critically whether (i) the experimental work complies with SI guidelines and the Good Practice Guide; and (ii) the conclusions drawn are based on sound scientific background information.


