probe the chemical structure of soil organic matter to crop yields and changes in organic matter content measured in field experiments. It is unusual, and very useful, to bring together so many different approaches in one volume. The key role of soil organic matter as a component of the total environment, in addition to its agricultural importance, is well illustrated by the contributions. Soil organic matter is often a major source of the nitrate that can pollute aquifers and is a vast reservoir of carbon that must be taken into account in any consideration of global carbon cycling and the greenhouse effect.

It is inevitable in a book of this type that the individual chapters vary enormously in quality and scope. Some summarize results from large numbers of experiments, some give details of a specific technique. Some report or summarize work of considerable interest and wide significance, others are more limited. The camera-ready format means that quality of presentation and readability are very variable, being dependent on the type of word processor available to the authors. Most are perfectly adequate, some are excellent.

The majority of the chapters will be of value for some years to come as an introduction to the different subjects, as they provide useful summaries of current thinking. Many of them also contain a good list of references that will be of value to a researcher who is new to the particular topic. This book is almost obligatory reading for specialists in soil organic matter and a valuable addition to the bookshelves of any university, college or research establishment concerned with soil, agriculture, environmental matters or land use.

D. S. POWLSON

Erratum

Journal of Agricultural Science **117** (1991), 355–361

M. A. LAREDO, G. D. SIMPSON, D. J. MINSON AND C. G. ORPIN

An omission occurred in the title, which should have read as follows:

The potential for using n-alkanes in tropical forages as a marker for the determination of dry matter intake by grazing ruminants