only related to the new ideas of the structure of SOM and the results of the MESCOSAGR project but also to the informative introductory sections of many of the chapters.

*In Italian: Metodi sostenibili per il sequestro del carbonio organico nei suoli agrari. English translation: Sustainable methods for organic carbon sequestration in agricultural soils.

Charles Shand

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Pastoralism and Development in Africa: Dynamic Change at the Margins. Edited by A. Catley, J. Lind and I. Scoones. Abingdon, Oxon, UK: Routledge/Taylor and Francis (2012), pp. 328, £24.95 (pb). ISBN 978-0-415-54072-8.

This book, which deals with 'The Greater Horn of Africa', from Tanzania to the Sudan, is based on papers presented to a conference on 'The Future of Pastoralism in Africa' held in Addis Ababa in 2011. Its assessment of the state of the region's pastoral industry is much more positive than that of popular media. Novel development pathways in marginal areas are being devised which are not easily adopted or recognised by the mainstream; these are informal, often hidden and may contradict the priorities of political elites. Pastoralists have always struggled with drought, conflict and famine so are resourceful and commercial by necessity. They now understand markets and their trade networks are massive, supplying regional cities and exporting to Arabia; informal systems are difficult to tax. Authors stress pastoral resource management and entrepreneurialism with cooperation across social and economic borders. Major threats to pastoral society include population increase, there are now more pastoralists than the grazing and livestock can support; they seek alternative livelihoods but get little assistance. Loss of grazing land is often due to land clearing for crops, usually of low sustainability and doubtful profitability; these developments are usually on floodplains, which provide the dry-season grazing on which the rest of the rangelands (and wildlife) depend. This book is recommended to all interested in pastoralism and should be especially valuable to planners and decision makers.

J. M. Suttie

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Plant Evolution and the Origin of Crop Species. Third edition. By J. F. Hancock. Wallingford, UK: CABI (2012), pp. 245, £85.00. ISBN 978-1-84593-801-7.

For almost the last 20 years, 'Hancock' has been the standard introductory text on crop plant origins for students of agricultural botany at all levels. The reason given for preparing this new edition is that there is much new information available, mainly from molecular studies.

This book will feel very familiar to experienced agronomists, as much useful material on how genetic variability arises and leads to speciation has been retained, albeit somewhat updated. Evidence for, and theories about, origins of agriculture and plant domestication are discussed, with human food crops being dealt with in groups. Cereal, protein and carbohydrate 'families' provide the bulk of material and are dealt with separately, but other major crop types – fruits, vegetables, fibres and oils – are condensed within a single chapter. Forage and medicinal plants are ignored, as are beverage plants and forest products.

Readers should treat this book as very useful background, but not attempt to regard Hancock's accounts of non-plant based topics such as human evolution as up-to-date starting points for deep study.

'Hancock 3' is not about modern, directed plant breeding; one should not expect to find much about selection techniques or breeding methodology. There is, however, a short postscript on the need to conserve genetic resources and the extensive list of references is invaluable.

J. T. Walker