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Institution of Agricultural Engineers (IAgrE) Fellow Professor Jane Rickson wins a 2021 Top 50 Women in Engineering Award

IAgrE Fellow Jane Rickson, Professor of Soil Erosion and Conservation at Cranfield Soil and Agrifood Institute, Cranfield University, has been honoured with a Top 50 Women in Engineering Award from the Women's Engineering Society.

The awards are a UK event linked to International Women in Engineering Day (INWED) which takes place on the 23rd June each year.

In association with the Guardian newspaper and Assystem the 2021 Top 50 Women in Engineering celebrates Engineering Heroes, the best, brightest and bravest women in engineering.

Jane's work uses engineering principles to understand the environment around us and works with land-based industries to develop and apply in-field practices for environmental protection. She has focused on the role of soil and water engineering to deliver ecosystems goods and services, including water regulation, agricultural production and carbon storage using transdisciplinary skills to integrate engineering with economics and social sciences.

Her research also includes engineering the landscape to increase carbon sequestration and storage to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. She has shown that adapting to extreme weather events associated with climate change is possible by working with farmers to design and test field engineering practices that can mitigate soil and water losses, such as the use of conservation tillage, grass waterways and field buffer strips. Other research has tested different soil cultivation equipment to improve soil health and crop growth, simulating real life field conditions in cutting-edge pilot scale laboratory facilities that Jane helped to design and build at Cranfield.

Throughout her career, Jane has been an inspiration to soil scientists and land-based engineers across the world. Her work played a key role in Cranfield being awarded the prestigious Queen's Anniversary Prize in 2017 for research and education in large-scale soil

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and environmental data for the sustainable use of natural resources in the UK and worldwide.

Jane was President of the Institution of Agricultural Engineers (2018-2020), the first female in the Institution's 80-year history to hold the role. She acts as a mentor for other women, especially young female researchers, and engages in outreach activities that encourage girls to take up science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) through her links with local primary schools and media work.

IAgrE CEO Charlie Nicklin said, "I am absolutely delighted for Professor Rickson to be honoured with this award. Jane is a great example not only to women, but to all young people on the types of roles that engineers' and scientists undertake in our industry. Jane's important research in soil science has, and continues to, significantly further knowledge in this area. Through her teaching and mentoring Jane has inspired many current and future engineers and scientists in tackling sustainability and the effects of climate change. Jane is a thoroughly deserving recipient of this award."

On learning of the award Professor Rickson said, "I am absolutely delighted to have been awarded this accolade. I hope I can show by example that engineering is an exciting and rewarding career choice for young people. We need to continue to break the often stereotypical image of 'the engineer', so that the profession is seen to be much more inclusive, diverse and welcoming to anyone with an interest in designing, building, testing and improving the world around us."

Jane has consistently achieved beyond what would normally be expected for her career stage, becoming a Professor at 44 years old. In 2019, Jane won the Milton Keynes Women Leaders award for Engineering, Science and Maths and the overall Outstanding Achievement award.

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[Click here to download image of Professor Jane Rickson](#)

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IAgrE is the professional body for scientists, technologists, engineers, academics, managers and students working in the land-based sector and has an international membership base.

As a licensed body of the Engineering Council (EngC) and a founding Constituent Body of The Society for the Environment (SocEnv), IAgrE registers suitably experienced professionals as iagre.org

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