Each sheet contains a different data set:

Sheet 1: Abiotic fators

Data for abiotic soil factors i.e. pH-KCl, total nitrogen, percentage of ash rest, K, Mg, Ca, Al, P, Olsen-P, N/P ratio, percentage of organic matter OM, percentage of carbon, C/N ratio of soil samples collected at three forest sites in Flanders (Belgium): Aelmoeseneie, Doode Bemde and Muizen forest. In all sites, we compared soil conditions in ancient and postagricultural forest parcels.

Sheet 2: Nematode community

Nematode composition in soil samples collected in three different forest sites in Flanders (Belgium); at each site ancient parcels and post-agricultural parcels were sampled.

Sheet 3: Data info of characteristics of species in the introduction experiment

Data on basic plant traits of plants reintroduced in post-agricultural and ancient parcels in the Muizen forest (Belgium). For each plant we meassured: length in cm, number of stems, number of holes in leaves, number of leaves, number of leaves with signs of herbivory, proportion of leaves showing herbivory marks, herbivory index.

Sheet 4: Invertebrate abundance on surveyed plants along transects in the Muizen forest, Belgium

Invertebrate abundance was assessed for all plants present along 10m x 1m transects in the Muizen forest in Belgium. We compared invertebrate abundance in post-agricultural forest parcels and ancient parcels.

Sheet 5: vegetation plots

Data on vegetation plots. Plots 10 x 10m. For each forest site i.e. Muizen forest, Aelmoeseneie(ALM) and Doode Bemde six parcels were sampled; 3 on ancient forest parcels and 3 on postagricultural. For each plot the understory vegetation was recorded.

Sheet 6: vegetation transects

Comparison of plant species in the understory along transects in the Muizen forest. 10 transect surveys were conducted in ancient forest plots and 10 in post-agricultural.

Sheet 7: Ecoplates

For the characterization of the soil microbial community we used a method that measures by spectrometric quantification the utilization by microbes of different carbon substrates in microtiter plates (EcoPlates®). Here we compare mean values for soil samples taken in post-agricultural and ancient forest sites.

Sheet 8: Data experiment Urtica dioica

Data on plant traits and analysis of population build-up of Aphis urticata on Urtica dioica plants growing in soil collected in post-agricultural forest parcels or in ancient forest parcels. The experiment also compared the effect of soil sterilization and provenance on plant performance by measuring plant growth (biomass, no. of runners and flowering).

Sheet 9: Plant nutrient analysis

Data on nitrogen and phosphorus content of harvested plants from a re-introduction experiment in ancient and post-agricultural forest parcels (in the Muizen forest, Belgium). There were four species compared i.e. Geum urbanum, Circaea lutetiana, Primula elatior and Urtica dioica. Plants were weighed after drying to constant weight at 70 °C for 48 h.

Sheet 10: Data Deschampsia cespitosa experiment

Data on the effect of soil sterilization (sterilized vs. non- sterile) and provenance (i.e. ancient and post-agricultural) on plant growth of Deschampsia cespitosa.

Sheet 12 and Sheet 13: Population build-up of aphids on Urtica dioica and Deschampsia cespitosa