

Name of research institute or organization:

Institut für Umweltphysik, Universität Heidelberg

Title of project:

Long-term observations of $^{14}\text{CO}_2$ at Jungfraujoch

Project leader and team:

Ingeborg Levin, project leader
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Project description:

^{14}C is the natural radioactive carbon isotope which is produced in the atmosphere by cosmic ray induced reactions with atmospheric nitrogen. The radioactive half life of ^{14}C is 5730 years. The natural equilibrium level of atmospheric $^{14}\text{CO}_2$ has been disturbed by man's activities in the last century, via the ongoing input of fossil fuel CO_2 into the atmosphere known as Suess effect, and through nuclear detonations in the atmosphere in the 1950s and early 1960s. CO_2 from burning of fossil fuels, due to its age of several hundred million years, is free of ^{14}C ; adding fossil fuel CO_2 to the atmosphere, therefore, not only leads to an increase of its mixing ratio but also to a decrease of the $^{14}\text{C}/^{12}\text{C}$ ratio in atmospheric CO_2 . From this decrease we can directly calculate the contemporary fossil fuel CO_2 surplus at a measurement site, e.g. on the European continent, if the undisturbed background level is known.

Atmospheric $^{14}\text{CO}_2$ observations at Jungfraujoch serve as this background for other observational sites in Central Europe. The observations have been started in 1986 and were continued without interruption until the end of 2004. The Jungfraujoch background $^{14}\text{CO}_2$ level was used to calculate the fossil fuel CO_2 component at Schauinsland station as well as in Heidelberg from respective $^{14}\text{CO}_2$ observations. These results are described in detail in a paper recently published by Levin et al. [2003]. All Jungfraujoch data until the end of 2003 have been published by Levin and Kromer [2004].

References:

Levin, I., B. Kromer, M. Schmidt and H. Sartorius, 2003. A novel approach for independent budgeting of fossil fuels CO_2 over Europe by $^{14}\text{CO}_2$ observations. *Geophys. Res. Lett.* 30(23), 2194, doi. 10.1029/2003GL018477.

Levin, I. and B. Kromer, 2004. The tropospheric $^{14}\text{CO}_2$ level in mid-latitudes of the Northern Hemisphere (1959-2003). *Radiocarbon* 46(3), in press.

Key words:

carbon dioxide, Radiocarbon, fossil fuel CO_2 , climate, Kyoto Protocol

Internet data bases:

<http://www.iup.uni-heidelberg.de/institut/forschung/groups/kk/>

Collaborating partners/networks:

CarboEurope (<http://www.carboeurope.org/>)

Scientific publications and public outreach 2004:

Refereed journal article

Levin, I. and B. Kromer, 2004. The tropospheric $^{14}\text{CO}_2$ level in mid-latitudes of the Northern Hemisphere (1959-2003). *Radiocarbon* 46(3), in press.

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