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To
The Editor,

Date: 19-12-2015

Sir,

I request that the following matter may kindly be published in your esteemed daily:

Need for Land Use Inventory for Soil Health Management Stressed

The fourth lecture dedicated to the memory of Dr. B. Ramamoorthy was delivered on yesterday (18.12.2015) on the eve of International Year of Soils by Dr. A. Natarajan, NRM Consultant, Watershed Development Department, Government of Karnataka, Bengaluru at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore. The gathering of Scientists and students was welcomed by Dr. V.V. Krishnamurthi, Professor and Head, Department of Soil Science & Agricultural Chemistry, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University and President, Indian Society of Soil Science, Coimbatore Chapter, Coimbatore. In his welcome address, he pointed out that this is the fourth series of lectures dedicated to the memory of late Dr. B. Ramamoorthy, one of stalwarts among the Soil Scientists of this country during 20th century in Soil Fertility and Fertilizer Use Research. Dr. B. Ramamoorthy has evolved the inductive cum targeted yield concept suited to our Indian soils and climatic conditions.

Dr. A. Natarajan, NRM Consultant, Watershed Development Department, Government of Karnataka, Bengaluru while delivering the 4th Dr. B. Ramamoorthy Memorial Lecture on “Soil Health for Sustainable Agriculture” - gave an overview about the importance of Soil Health, Criticality of Soil Health, Extent of Land Degradation, Salinity and alkalinity hazard, The challenges ahead, Need for Land Resource Inventory for Soil Health Management, Establishment of Digital Library and Portal, Need for Soil Health Assessment, Parameters to be considered for the

Assessment of Soil Health, Field Assessment of Soil Health, Establishment of national/state level regulations for promoting the best land use practices.

While stressing the importance of soil health, about 1000 or more years are needed to form one inch of soil under normal circumstances and to form the upper six inches of soil, which is considered as the plough layer, it will take somewhere between 5000 and 10000 years is recalled. Likewise, this invaluable resource, which is constituted with various mineral particles, water, air, organic matter, and living organisms is very vital to perform the various as well as diligent functions which underpin the health of our society.

On criticality of soil health, world population is projected to increase from 7 billion in 2013 to more than 9 billion in 2050. To sustain this level of growth, food production will need to rise by about 70 percent which can come only from the existing soil and other land resources. The existing situation is much more precarious in our country with rapidly shrinking land resources, competing needs of various uses and burgeoning population growth.

Further, the challenge before us is not only to increase the productivity per unit area, which is steadily declining and showing a fatigue syndrome, but also to prevent or at least reduce the severity of the various forms of degradation, which has reached alarming proportions. Salinity and alkalinity hazard is very widespread in the command areas, particularly in the Indo-Gangetic plains, command areas of Tungabhadra, Krishna and other peninsular rivers, tank irrigated arid inland plains of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh and coastal regions of Gujarat. Estimates indicate that about 10 per cent of the irrigated area is already affected by salinity.

In addition, The Working Group on Natural Resources Management constituted by the Planning Commission for the Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007) has stressed the need for generating detailed database on soil and land characteristics.

For effective management of land resources, the entire spatial and non-spatial database generated and also compiled from different sources needs to be converted into

a digital form, housed in an appropriate digital library and made available to the various line departments and developmental agencies on a real time basis through an appropriate delivery mechanism like Portal.

While concluding the lecture, the speaker stressed that soil is the great connector of our lives, the source and destination of all. It is the healer, restorer of everything that supports our life on this planet. Without proper care for it, we can have no society because without proper care for it we can have no life on this planet.

Dr. R. Natesan, Professor, Department of Soil Science & Agricultural Chemistry, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore proposed the vote of thanks.

Asst. Public Relations Officer