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To
The Editor,

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Sir,

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

Soil Testing Indispensable for Lucrative yield, says VC, Gandhi Gram Rural Institute

The memorial lecture on Dr. B. Ramamoorthy was delivered on 5-12-2014 on the eve of world soil day by Dr. S. Natarajan, Vice Chancellor, Gandhigram Rural Institute – Deemed University, Gandhigram at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore.

The Scientists and students were welcomed by Dr. R. Jayakumar, Professor and Head, Department of Soil Science & Agricultural Chemistry, TNAU and President, Indian Society of Soil Science, Coimbatore Chapter, Coimbatore. In his address he pointed out that this the third 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 soil and climatic conditions. He has revolutionized the concept relating to economic and efficient fertilizer use.

Dr. V.P. Duraisami, Special Officer, Directorate of Natural Resource Management, TNAU, Coimbatore in his speech on introduction of the speaker brought out Dr. S. Natarajan's commendable contribution towards various fields of Soil Science with special reference to soil survey, Remote sensing and Natural Resource Management.

Dr. R. Rabindran, Registrar, TNAU, Coimbatore in his presentation emphasized the significance of soils and the need for soil health management. He further, expressed that as a tribute and homage to the memory of Dr. B. Ramamoorthy, TNAU feels proud to invite eminent scientists every year to enrich the knowledge and wisdom on soil fertility and fertiliser use research among the younger generation and to recollect immense contributions made by the veteran Scientist.

Dr. S. Natarajan, Vice Chancellor, Gandhigram Rural Institute – Deemed University, Gandhigram while delivering the Lecture on Soil Resource Database – Basis for Soil testing and fertilizer Recommendation - gave an overview on the applications of soil resource database in agriculture viz., land use planning, management of irrigation and water, watershed, degraded land and productivity, soil health and soil fertility management. Soil survey was carried out in India based on the standard procedures laid out in soil survey manual of All India Soil Survey and Land Use Organization, IARI, New Delhi. In addition, methodologies were also developed by NBSS & LUP, TNAU and NRSA. Remote Sensing and Geographic Information System Techniques were used as mapping tools in different soil resource inventory projects. Soil testing is the only way to determine the available nutrient status of soil and to receive fertilizer recommendations. Soil survey units of Department of Agriculture, National Bureau of Soil Survey and Land Use planning, and Department of Remotes Sensing and GIS, TNAU are involved in creating soil resource database in Tamil Nadu for different purposes.

Soil testing laboratories were established in Tamil Nadu in 1950's and a Soil Health Softwares (DSSIFER – Decision Support system or Integrated Fertilizer Recommendation) was developed by TNAU in which fertilizer recommendations were made based on targeted yield approach, Mitscherlich and Bray approach and Blanket recommendation. So far STCR scheme of TNAU is successful in developing fertilizer prescription equation for 25 crops across major soil series of Tamil Nadu.

The speaker also highlighted the differences between soil resource and soil testing through lucid examples. He emphasized the importance of precision farming in soil fertility management. He accentuated the significance of the establishment of soil health centers in developing soil analytical database at village / block/ taluk / district level for the benefits of the farmers and that Soil scientists have great role in boosting the crop yields and providing food security to the exploding population by involving soil based capsule technologies for different crops under varied conditions so as to pave way for sustainable agriculture.

Finally, Dr. R. Santhi, Professor (SS&AC), TNAU, Coimbatore proposed a vote of thanks.

Public Relations Officer