

## World Soil Day and Agriculture Education Day Celebrated at ICAR-IISS, Bhopal

Soil degradation has assumed serious proportion in our country, and as per the estimates about 104 million hectares of land area faces one or other form of soil degradation. In addition, agriculture sector is facing the threat of climate change. In this context, Soil Health Awareness Programme is being celebrated at ICAR-Indian Institute of Soil Science (IISS), Bhopal during December 04-06, 2023. World Soil Day (WSD) celebrated every year by Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations on 5<sup>th</sup> December. This year's theme of WSD is *"Soil and Water, a source of life"*.

On 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2023 Soil Health Awareness Programme was begun with the delivery of a lecture on "Soil Science" by Dr. S.P. Datta, Director, ICAR-IISS, Bhopal to educate the school children. About 50 students participated in the program with their teachers. This was followed by a Quiz Competition on "Soil Health" amongst the School Children.

On 5<sup>th</sup> December, a massive March Past was organized by the scientists, staff members and students of ICAR-IISS, Bhopal to spread awareness among the public on the importance of soil and water in human life, ecosystem and protection of these precious resources. Dr. S.P. Datta, Director welcomed the chief guest Dr. A.K. Singh, Former VC Rajmata Vijayaraje Scindia Krishi Vishwavidyalaya, Gwalior. The chief guest delivered the World Soil Day lecture and highlighted the importance of scientific use of water for higher productivity of soil. He also stressed upon the ecosystem services provided by soil and the need to quantify them for optimum soil management. In the lecture, he exhorted the audience the need for maintaining soil health to maintain human and environment health. The programme is also being extended to Village Level for mass awareness amongst the farmers on "Soil Health".

