

World Soil Day 2020: Keep Soil Alive, Protect Soil Biodiversity

One teaspoonful soil contains more than a million of microorganisms. Soil microorganisms are responsible for many critical soil ecosystem processes like organic matter decomposition, carbon storage, nutrient cycling and many other processes having direct influence on food production. However, unsustainable management of soil leading to depletion in biodiversity of soil microbes has been a matter of concern now.



Hence, the United Nations based Food and Agriculture Organization has set “Keep soil alive, protect soil biodiversity” as the theme of this year’s World Soil Day celebration worldwide. Every year on 5th December, World Soil Day is celebrated to raise awareness among the public, different stakeholders and farmers on a theme related to soil conservation.

On this occasion, ICAR-Indian Institute of Soil Science, Bhopal organized ‘Soil health awareness week’ during 1-7 December 2020 and celebrated the World Soil Day on 5th December, 2020 with participation of scientists, students, researchers and the local farming community. A March-Past was organized in the Institute campus, where more than 200 participants joined. The Institute Director, Dr. Ashok K. Patra emphasized the role of soil and soil biodiversity and deliberated on some advanced soil management technologies such as conservation agriculture, STCR based soil nutrient recommendation, micronutrient management and microbial formulations for decomposition of crop residues. In the afternoon, a farmer-scientist interaction meet was organized in a virtual mode in which about 300

farmers participated. Dr. S. K. Chaudhari, DDG (NRM) graced the occasion and appreciated the efforts of the Institute in involving a number of stakeholders in the soil health awareness campaign. In his address to the farmers in the virtual meeting, he called for sustained efforts in preserving the health of soil through use of scientific methods of soil management.

As part of the week-long program, farmer-scientist interaction meets were organized in different Mera Gaon Mera Gaurav (MGMG) villages of Bhopal district with the objectives of creating awareness on soil health among different stakeholders like government organizations and farming communities. School and College students of Red Rose School, Bhopal and Bhopal School of Social Sciences were involved in the campaign through webinar programs and expert lectures on 3rd December 2020. A special lecture on ‘**Science and management of soil health**’ was delivered by Dr. DLN Rao, former Project



Coordinator of All India Network Project on Soil Biodiversity and Biofertilizers to the students. About 100 students and teachers participated in the program. A wide circulation about the campaign on soil health was

also made to the local print media and electronic media including DD-Kisan and All India Radio.

