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SABUJEEMA

An International Multidisciplinary e-Magazine

Volume 1 | Issue 9 | December, 2021

SOIL HEALTH CARD: A BOON FOR THE INDIAN FARMER

- Kabyarupa Swain

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Sabujeema Sabujeema
editorsabujeema@gmail.com
sabujeema-international
multidisciplinary-e-magazine





SOIL HEALTH CARD: A BOON FOR THE INDIAN FARMER

[Article ID: SIMM0147]

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ABSTRACT

Soil is the important living thing in the nature in which most of the microorganisms live and providing the water, nutrients, organic matters and other essential elements for plant growth. We can call the soil as living because if we take a handful of soil, it will allow a plant to grow healthy due to presence of microorganisms, and many other things. In agroecosystem continuous manipulation of soil is going on due to addition of inputs, removal of nutrients, changing water balance and microbial life which affects the soil's physical, chemical as well as biological property. Soil health is an integrative property that reflects the capacity of soil to respond to agricultural intervention, so that it continues to both agricultural production and the provision of other ecosystem services. The need of soil testing is very much important for getting overall physical, biological and chemical behaviour of soil. From soil testing we can save the extra nutrients application, runoff and leaching losses, diagnosis the plant culture problems

to improve the balance nutrients application, save money, conserve energy and many more. Therefore, soil testing is a future need for improvement of soil fertility as well as the soil health and crop production.

WHY SOIL TESTING:

As soil is a living thing and the health of soil should be test to know about it is good or not. We should give more emphasis on soil testing and motivate our farmers for soil testing also. Soil is a measurement on scale from acidic to basic. Soil having pH 6.5-7.5 is more ideal for crop production. Some soil is more acidic and some are basic. pH range below 5 is not suitable for crop production. Availability of nutrients in soil is also determines from soil testing. The major micro element (N, P, K) percentage determination is the main criteria of soil testing so that the farmers are advice to apply recommended dose of fertilizer to minimize the input and cost. Determination of some other micronutrients like Al, B, Mn, Co analysed from the soil testing when there are symptoms of crop problems.

SOIL TESTING:

Govt. of India has already started awareness campaign in over 11 lakh villages for promoting use of bio fertilizer and reduce the use of chemical soil nutrients. A decision was taken after the progress of Soil Health Card (SHC), introduced after 2015. The mission of the campaign is to educate the farmers about the need of soil testing and to follow the recommendations of SHC for better management of soil. A comprehensive campaign also launched on soil test based rational application of fertilizer and promotion of organic farming including, Bhartiya Prakriti Krishi Padhati (BPKP). The Govt. has already built the soil testing lab in every district, appoint lab assistant and a skilled person in every soil testing lab, provide mini soil testing kits and many more.

A 2017 study by National Productivity Council (NPC) found that the SHC scheme has promoted sustainable farming and led to decrease in use of chemical fertilizer application in range of 8-10%. Besides overall increase in the yields of crops to 5-6% by the application of recommended fertilizer and micronutrients mentioned in the SHC.



SOIL HEALTH CARD:

Soil health card is a field specific detailed report of soil fertility status and other important soil parameters that affects crop productivity. Under the scheme the Govt. has plan to issue soil cards to the farmers which will carry crop wise recommendation of fertilizer and manure. In phase 1 (2015-17) of the scheme 10.74crore cards were distributed

while under phase 2 (2017-19) 11.69crore cards have been distributed.

SOIL HEALTH CARD SCHEME:

- A Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare was introduced the scheme on 5th December 2015.
- Soil health card is a printed report that consists of nutrient status of the soil, pH, organic carbon, electrical conductivity.
- SHC is provided to all the farmers in the country at an interval of 3 years to enable the farmers to apply recommended doses of nutrient based on the soil test report to improve and sustain soil health, fertility at low cost and get higher productivity.



Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Government of India Department of Agriculture & Farmers' Empowerment		Soil Health Card	
Farmer's Details Farmer Name: [Name] Address: [Address] Village: [Village] District: [District] State: [State] PIN: [PIN] Land Use: [Land Use] Soil Health Card Number: [Number] Issue Date: [Date]		Soil Sample Details Soil Sample Number: [Number] Date of Sample Collection: [Date] Sample Size: [Size] Soil Type: [Soil Type] Soil Texture: [Texture]	
Soil Test Results pH: [pH] Organic Carbon: [Value] Electrical Conductivity: [Value] Available Nitrogen: [Value] Available Phosphorus: [Value] Available Potassium: [Value] Soil Moisture: [Value]		Soil Test Results pH: [pH] Organic Carbon: [Value] Electrical Conductivity: [Value] Available Nitrogen: [Value] Available Phosphorus: [Value] Available Potassium: [Value] Soil Moisture: [Value]	
General Recommendations Crop: [Crop] Fertilizer: [Fertilizer] Manure: [Manure]		General Recommendations Crop: [Crop] Fertilizer: [Fertilizer] Manure: [Manure]	