



Greetings and welcome to the third issue of **BETTER CROPS-INDIA**. We are happy to provide you with this annual publication from the International Plant Nutrition Institute (IPNI), featuring articles on research projects related to fertiliser use in India. We welcome your comments on this publication, and suggestions for future issues.

It is ironic that at the close of 2009 we have seen one of the most erratic years in the global fertiliser industry. After demand for fertiliser nutrients soared, along with prices, they have both declined once again. The impact of the global economic crisis seems to have completely shadowed the issue of a food crisis, something we were focused on last year at this time. However, the reality is that the world continues to have only very limited food reserves, a fact which has not changed with all of the concern about international credit and finance. We are no further ahead than we were at the end

of 2008; in fact, we are more than ever facing potential food shortage problems in many parts of the world once again in the near future.

The issue of making fertiliser recommendations based on site-specific conditions has formed the basis of the IPNI Programme in India. For the most part, we have clearly demonstrated that field-specific soil testing, which evaluates the sample for all macronutrients, secondary nutrients, and micronutrients, provides the necessary information to overcome the nutrient deficiencies limiting full yield response. These results, when added to the overwhelming number gathered by other Indian researchers, clearly demonstrate that the “yield stagnation” so often referred to in Indian food production has some clear solutions. However, we continue to see little to no response in the way of expanding soil testing services or offering a wider set of soil analysis services in the country – a major challenge. We have initiated work in India with international research partners to address this issue in the development of nutrient management decision support systems. While these tools may not fully replace soil testing, they will add significant support to making improved fertiliser recommendations in a country like India. We are optimistic that the future of food production in India will show the increases necessary to keep pace with the growing population.

Fertilisers are an important player in the production of food and protein in society, and especially Asian society. Ranging between 40 to 60% – that is the estimated amount of the global food supply which is attributed to fertiliser use. We understand the impact of fertiliser use on food security, as well as the need to foster the responsible use of fertiliser nutrients based on farmer economics and environmental impact. It is this balancing act which guides our efforts as we move forward into the future.

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