Two Outstanding Graduate Students in India Receive IPNI Scholar Awards for 2008

The International Plant Nutrition Institute (IPNI) presents its Scholar Award to deserving graduate students in sciences relevant to plant nutrition and management of crop nutrients. Two outstanding individuals at universities in India are among the 2008 honorees recently announced. They are: **I. Vimal Jothi** of Agricultural College and Research Institute, Killikulam, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU), and **Wasim Iftikar** of Palli Siksha Bhavana, Visva Bharati University.

Recipients of the IPNI Scholar Award receive a check in the amount of US$2,000 (two thousand dollars) and a certificate. The award is granted directly to the student independent of any assistantship, scholarship, or other award that the individual might hold.

"We received a significant number of applications for the Scholar Awards and were impressed with the qualifications and academic records of the applicants," said Dr. Terry Roberts, IPNI President. "This is a credit to the universities and institutions where these students are pursuing advanced degrees, and also speaks well of their major professors and advisors."

I. Vimal Jothi

Ms. I. Vimal Jothi has been involved in doctoral studies for the past 2 years with the thesis title of "Effect of Neem-Coated Nitrogen Use Efficiency, Yield, and Quality of Sugarcane." She completed her B.Sc. degree in 2003 and M.Sc. degree in 2005, also at TNAU. Her M.Sc. work focused on slow release fertilisers in rice. Her study now seeks to address the problem of storing more N in soils of arid and semi-arid regions, which is complicated by limitations in build-up of soil organic matter. Approaches that help slow mineralisation rate of fertiliser sources can increase immobilisation rate and subsequently slow release of N. The result is higher N utilisation by plants. She has investigated delaying the hydrolysis and nitrification of urea by treating with neem, a natural nitrification inhibitor. In her final year of study, research will establish the mineralisation pattern and associated N losses of neem products under lab and field conditions. This includes measuring ammonia volatilisation losses, ammonification rate, and nitrification rate from soil incubated in a controlled system. For the future, Ms. Jothi hopes to encourage adoption of new technologies by farmers while protecting the soil resource.

Abbreviations and notes for this article: N = nitrogen;

Wasim Iftikar

Mr. Wasim Iftikar completed his B.Sc. in Agriculture and M.Sc. degree in Agronomy at Visva Bharati University and recently began pursuing a Ph.D. through a programme called "Studies on Geographic Information System (GIS) Based Soil Fertility Mapping for Nutrient Management in Red and Lateritic Soils". Its objectives include assessment of spatial variability, comparing the relative efficiency of GIS map-based soil fertility evaluation system to conventional soil testing for native fertility prediction in farmer fields, and exploring use of GIS maps in site-specific nutrient management in the rice-potato-sesame cropping sequence. He has also worked as a research fellow on an IPNI-supported programme called "Importance of Soil Test Based Nutrient Application through Farmers' Participatory Approach in Red and Lateritic Zones of West Bengal." For the future, Mr. Iftikar is well aware of the challenge India will face in achieving the estimated 300 million metric tons of annual food grain production needed by the year 2025. He is optimistic that GIS-based soil fertility mapping and other innovative practices will be effective in achieving progress. He also hopes to build on his extensive involvement in sports and community activities as tools in furthering goals related to food production through educational programs. BC INDIA

Rice: A Practical Guide to Nutrient Management 2nd Edition Now Available in Hindi

Through an agreement of the International Potash Institute (IPI) with the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) and the International Plant Nutrition Institute (IPNI), the English version of *Rice: A Practical Guide to Nutrient Management* (2nd Edition), by T.H. Fairhurst, C. Witt, R.J. Buresh, and A. Dobermann (eds), 2007 (ISBN 978-981-05-7949-4) was recently translated to Hindi by Dr. B. Mishra, G.B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology (G.B. PUAT), Pantnagar, India. The Hindi translation (ISBN: 978-3-9523243-3-2; DOI: 10.3235/978-3-9523243-3-2) will soon be ready for distribution.

The publication sells for US$10.00 and orders can be placed at the IPI website: >www.ipipotash.org<. BC INDIA