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You are reading the seventh issue of *Better Crops South Asia* (formerly *Better Crops-India*), first introduced in 2007. This publication is released annually in the fourth quarter and follows a format similar to our quarterly publication known as *Better Crops with Plant Food*.

For 2013, the issue is focused on potassium (K). There is a marked variability in plant K availability in soils of South Asia, but concerns have been raised on severe mining of K in these soils. Fertiliser K recommendations in South Asia are generalized over large areas, while farmers neglect K application to crops and remove crop residues from fields. Evidence from several long-term fertiliser experiments in South Asia has indicated significant yield responses to K application and negative K balances, especially where K

application is either omitted or applied sub-optimally.

The research featured in this issue is a tribute to the scientific progress that is continually being made in the fields and laboratories throughout South Asia. Once again, we at IPNI wish to congratulate and thank the many cooperators, researchers, farmers, industry representatives, and others who are working for the benefit of agriculture in South Asia.



Dr. Terry L. Roberts, President, IPNI

2013 IPNI Scholar Award Recipients Announced

The winners of the 2013 Scholar Awards sponsored by the International Plant Nutrition Institute (IPNI) have been selected. The awards of US\$2,000 are available to graduate students in sciences relevant to plant nutrition and management of crop nutrients.

“We had a higher number of applicants for the Scholar Awards this year, and from a wider array of universities and fields of study,” said Dr. Terry L. Roberts, IPNI President. “And the qualifications of these students are impressive. The academic institutions these young people represent and their advisers and professors can be proud of their accomplishments. The selection committee adheres to rigorous guidelines in considering important aspects of each applicant’s academic achievements.”

The following 4 graduate students from the South Asia Region were named to receive the IPNI Scholar Award in 2013.



Anjani Kumar

Mr. Anjani Kumar is pursuing his Ph.D. in Agricultural System Management at Indian Institute of Technology in Kharagpur, India. The focus of his research is on nutrient and water management in aerobic rice systems, where he is evaluating nutrient management strategies and estimating the critical soil moisture potentials at the rice root zone depth for scheduling irrigation to sustain higher crop and water productivity. In the future, Mr. Kumar wants to pursue his research interests in crop modeling.



Mahesh Rajendran

Mr. Mahesh Rajendran is working toward his Ph.D. Agronomy degree at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University in Coimbatore, India. His research dissertation is titled “Best management practices to improve fertiliser and water use efficiency in sugarcane under subsurface drip fertigation system.” The research aims to provide a list of best management practices based on 4R Nutrient Stewardship to enhance sugarcane productivity and achieve higher nutrient- and water-use efficiencies. Mr. Mahesh aims to join a postdoctoral fellowship program to hone his skills in soil fertility and plant nutrition further with the goal of becoming a distinguished agricultural scientist.



Sonalika Sahoo

Ms. Sonalika Sahoo is working toward a doctorate degree in Soil Science and Agricultural Chemistry at Indian Agricultural Research Institute in New Delhi, India. Her dissertation is titled “Effect of nanoclay polymer composites loaded with urea and nitrification inhibitor on nitrogen use efficiency, nitrogen dynamics and soil properties.” The main objective of her study is to identify new slow release fertiliser products that will decrease nutrient losses and increase nutrient use efficiency to support the increasing food demand without deteriorating environment and ecosystem. For the future, Ms. Sahoo hopes to establish a career in agricultural research.



Naveen Gupta

Mr. Naveen Gupta is presently pursuing his doctorate program in Charles Sturt University, Australia on “Tillage and mulch effects on water balance and crop productivity of rice-wheat cropping system in northwest India.” He has also worked on nutrient management in rice and wheat grown with resource conservation technologies in Indo-Gangetic plains of India. He aims to become a Research Scientist in an international organization of repute in near future and work on nutrient and water interactions in cereal crops especially under changing climatic scenarios.