Introduction to Better Crops South Asia 2011

On behalf of the International Plant Nutrition Institute (IPNI) its a pleasure to introduce our 2011 edition of *Better Crops South Asia*. This is the fifth Issue–released annually each December–that follows a format similar to our quarterly publication known as *Better Crops with Plant Food*. However, *Better Crops South Asia* features research articles and information pertinent to this specific region. 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 in a positive mode for South Asian agriculture.

Dr. Terry L. Roberts, President, IPNI

2011 Scholar Award Recipients Announced by IPNI

The 2011 winners of the Scholar Award sponsored by the International Plant Nutrition Institute (IPNI) have been selected. The awards of USD 2,000 (two thousand dollars) 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."

In total, twenty graduate students were named to receive the IPNI Scholar Award in 2011, with the most widespread geographic distribution ever for the awards. The winners from the South Asia Region are:

Gopal Ramdas Mahajan, Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi, India

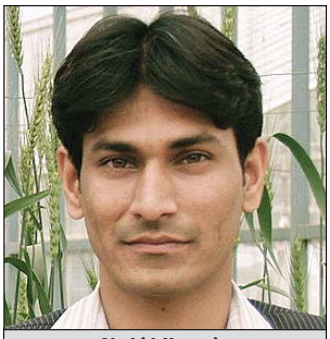
Shahid Hussain, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, Pakistan

Sumanta Kundu, Institute of Agricultural Sciences, Calcutta University, Kolkata, India

Funding for the Scholar Award program is provided through support of IPNI member companies, primary producers of nitrogen, phosphate, potash, and other fertilisers. Graduate students attending a degree-granting institution located in any country with an IPNI programme region are eligible. Following is a brief summary for each of the winners from South Asia.

Gopal Ramdas Mahajan

Mr. Gopal Ramdas Mahajan is pursuing his Ph.D. in Soil Science and Agricultural Chemistry at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) in New Delhi, India. His dissertation title is "Development of Site-Specific Integrated Nutrient Management for the Hybrid Rice-Wheat Cropping System Using Soil Test Crop Response Correlation Studies." Mr. Mahajan earned his Masters in 2009 from Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh and a Bachelors degree in 2007 at Mahatma Phule Krishi Vidyapeeth, Rahuri, Maharashtra. Mr. Mahajan's research is focused on developing individual as well as whole crop system soil test-based recommendation systems for target yields of hybrid rice and wheat and to develop in-situ spectral methods of fertilizer recommendation for the same cropping system. Mr. Mahajan has a strong rural background and his intentions are to work as a scientist at a grass roots (village) level in an effort to increase awareness about balanced plant nutrition with the goal of maximizing local benefits both in terms of farm profitability and environmental protection



Shahid Hussain

Mr. Shahid Hussain is working toward a doctorate degree at University of Agriculture in Faisalabad, Pakistan. His dissertation is titled "Bioavailable Grain Zinc in Wheat Varieties of Pakistan and Strategies for Biofortification." This study aims to evaluate zinc fertilisation and other agronomic means to increase grain zinc concentrations and to decrease the phytate-to-zinc molar ratio (an indicator of zinc bioavailability) in wheat grains. For the future, Mr. Hussain hopes to become an agricultural scientist and to continue his research efforts on biofortification of cereal grains with essential minerals.

Sumantu Kundu

Mr. Sumanta Kundu is completing requirements for his Ph.D. Program in Agronomy at the Institute of Agricultural Sciences in Calcutta University, India. His dissertation title is "Improving Nutrient Use Efficiency and Profitability through Conservation Tillage and Improved Nutrient Management in the Maize-Horsegram Cropping Sequence in Rainfed Alfisols." This research [located at the Central Research Institute for Dryland Agriculture (CRIDA), Hyderabad] is aimed to develop a set of best management practices that include a sustainable nutrient management strategy in combination with conservation tillage and soil amendments. BCSA