

Introduction to BETTER CROPS–SOUTH ASIA 2010

Welcome...

You are reading the first edition of this publication under the title of *BETTER CROPS–SOUTH ASIA*, published by the International Plant Nutrition Institute (IPNI). In 2007, 2008, and 2009, this publication was released as *BETTER CROPS–INDIA*. During 2010, the name of our former IPNI India Programme was changed and is now the IPNI South Asia Programme. This reflects the increasing efforts of our very capable staff in the region: Dr. Kaushik Majumdar, Dr. Harmandeep Singh, and Dr. T. Satyanarayana.

This publication 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. 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 Asia.

Dr. Terry L. Roberts, President, IPNI



2010 Scholar Award Recipients Announced by IPNI

The 2010 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, 16 (sixteen) graduate students were named to receive the IPNI Scholar Award in 2010, with the most widespread geographic distribution ever for the awards. The winners from the South Asia Region are:

Tanumoy Bera, Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi, India;

Neenu.S, Kerala Agricultural University, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India; and

Hafeez ur Rehman, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, Pakistan.

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 program region are eligible. Following is a brief summary for each of the winners from South Asia.

Mr. Tanumoy Bera is working toward his Doctorate degree in Soil Science at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute. His dissertation title is “Preparation, Characterisation, and Evaluation of Biochar for Enhancing Nutrient Use Efficiency by Rice and Maize.” His research focuses on how to enhance nutrient use efficiency by applying biochar (a pyrolysis product of biomass). The study includes characterising biochar from various plant-based residues produced by pyrolysis at different temperatures, optimising rates of application, and assessing impact of biochar on soil properties after crop harvest. For the future, Mr. Bera hopes to continue research to solve practical problems faced by farmers.



Tanumoy Bera



Neenu.S

Ms. Neenu.S is completing requirements for her Ph.D. degree in Soil Science and Agricultural Chemistry at Kerala Agricultural University in India. Her dissertation title is “Site-Specific Nutrient Management for Bitter Gourd (*Momordica charantia* L.)” Intensive cultivation in Kerala, in addition to the tropical monsoon climate and undulating topography, have led to severe soil nutrient depletion. Field-specific, integrated crop management strategies are needed for optimum profitability. For the future, Ms. Neenu.S hopes to do research in the field of soil fertility to improve crop production, reduce poverty, and reduce potential harm to the environment resulting from unscientific use of fertilisers.

Mr. Hafeez ur Rehman is completing requirements for his Ph.D. program in Agronomy at University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, Pakistan. His dissertation title is “Nitrogen and Zinc Dynamics under Different Rice Production Systems.” Mr. Rehman’s research project involved splitting of N and zinc (Zn) at different stages and forms under varying water regimes and their availability, uptake, and partitioning in aerobic and transplanted basmati rice. He hopes to continue research on plant nutrition, particularly characterisation of processes for enhanced Zn uptake and its further loading into rice grains to feed the malnourished people of the world. His work can also help farmers boost rice yields by improved water and nutrient management.



Hafeez ur Rehman

The IPNI Scholar Award recipients are selected by regional committees of IPNI scientific staff. The awards are presented directly to the students at their universities and no specific duties are required of them. Graduate students in the disciplines of soil and plant sciences including agronomy, horticulture, ecology, soil fertility, soil chemistry, crop physiology, and other areas related to plant nutrition are encouraged to apply. More information is available from IPNI staff, from individual universities, or from the IPNI website: >www.ipni.net/awards<. **BCSA**

Abbreviations: N = nitrogen.