



**Trust for Advancement of Agricultural Sciences (TAAS)**

**Brainstorming Session on 'Regenerative Agriculture for Soil Health and Environmental Security'**

# Technology Landscape for Enhancing Soil Health in Regenerating Agriculture



Ashok K. Patra



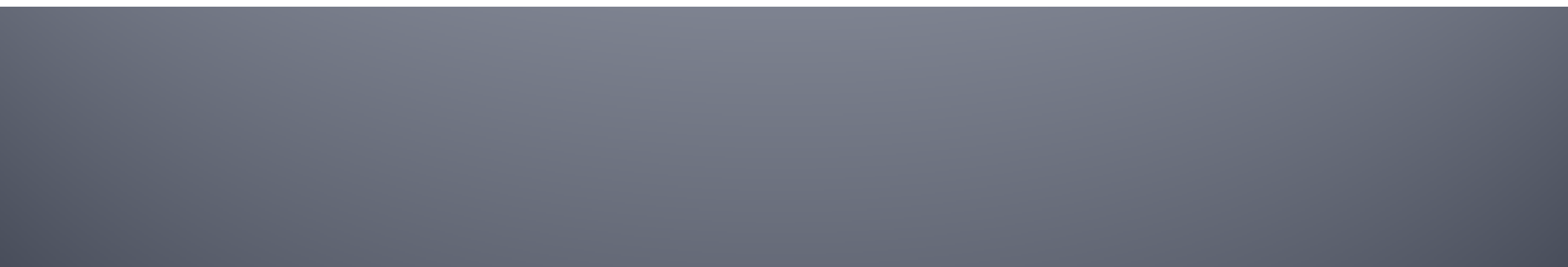
**ICAR-Indian Institute of Soil Science  
Bhopal**

# Soil under **severe threats !!!**



**Only 60 years of farmland left if current rate of degradation continues (FAO)**

**We are sleepwalking towards a crisis of agriculture**



# Increasing Soil Pollution

Environmental Chemistry for a Sustainable World

Jayanta K. Saha · Rajendiran Selladurai  
M. Vassanda Coumar · M.L. Dotaniya  
Samaresh Kundu · Ashok K. Patra

## Soil Pollution - An Emerging Threat to Agriculture

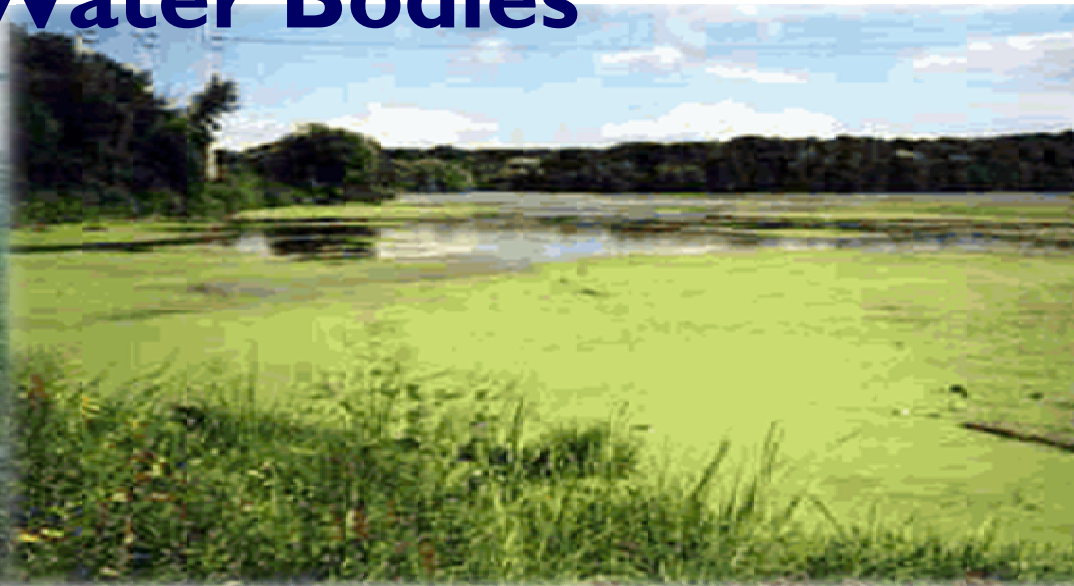
 Springer



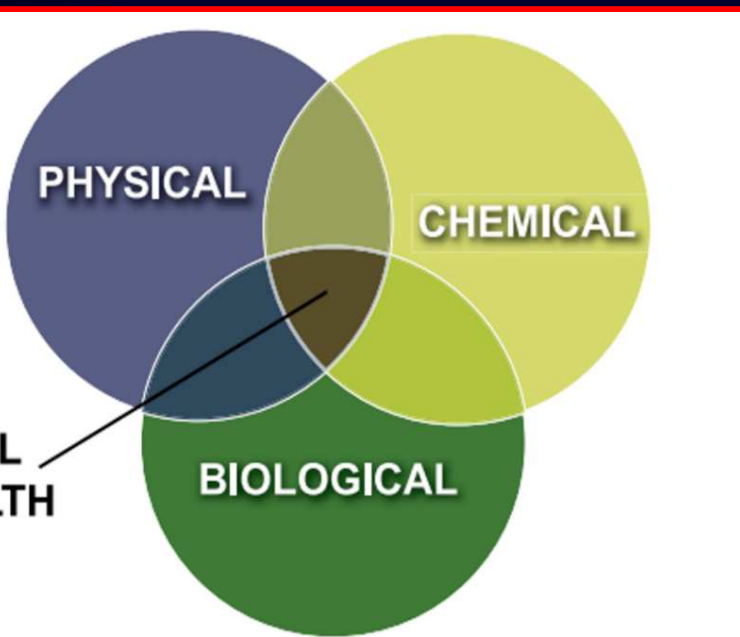
- Solid and liquid wastes contaminating land with salts, heavy metals and organic pollutants.
- India generates **>2 mt e-wastes/yr.**
- **>10 mt of plastic wastes/yr.**
- **COVID-19: Experts raise alarm about soil and water contamination (*Mid Day, 17 Dec. 2020*).**



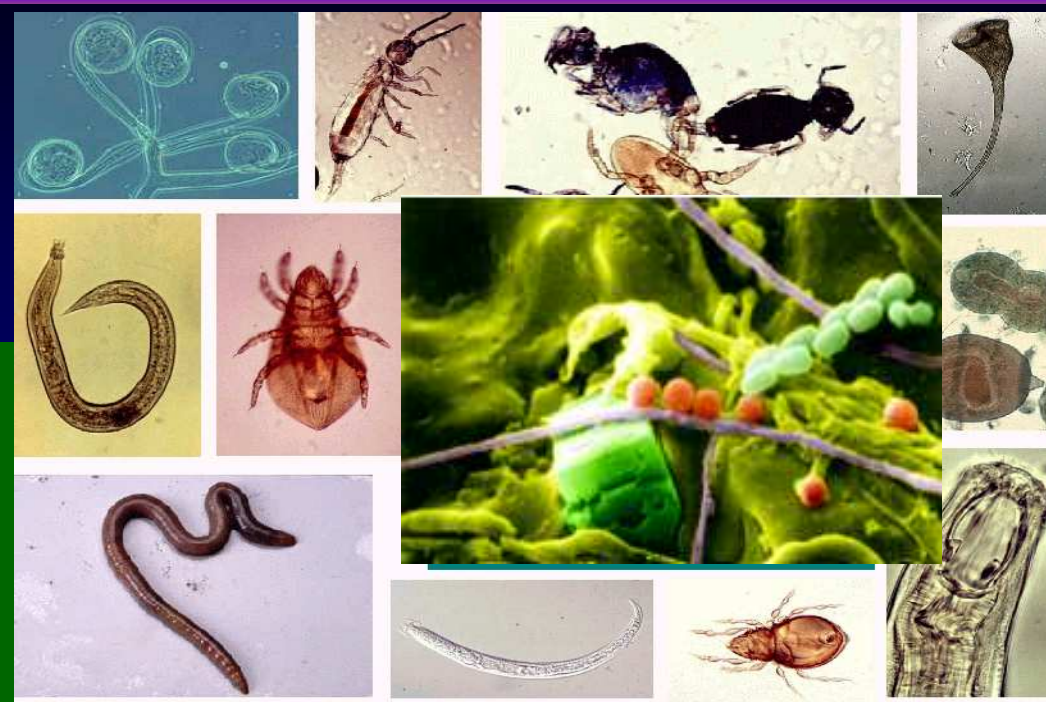
# Pollution of Water Bodies



# Declining soil health & biodiversity

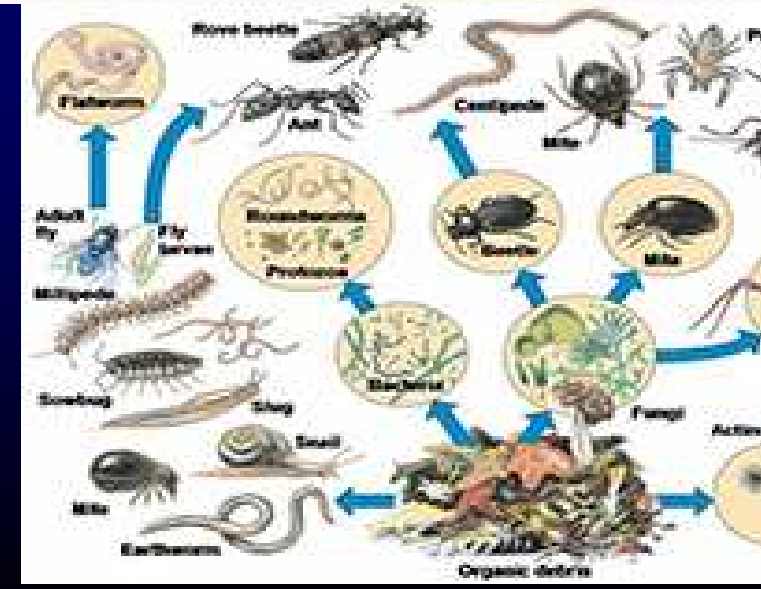


1 teaspoon healthy soil may contain  $10^4$  species of bacteria. 100 m bacteria.



**Soil health:** “The continued capacity of soil to function as a vital ecosystem, within ecosystem and land-use boundaries, to sustain biological productivity, maintain the quality of air and water environments, and promote plant, animal, and human health.” (Doran 1996: Adv. Agron. 56).

A good soil health is key to sustainability of food production, farmers’ profits, and entire ecosystem chain covering animal and human health

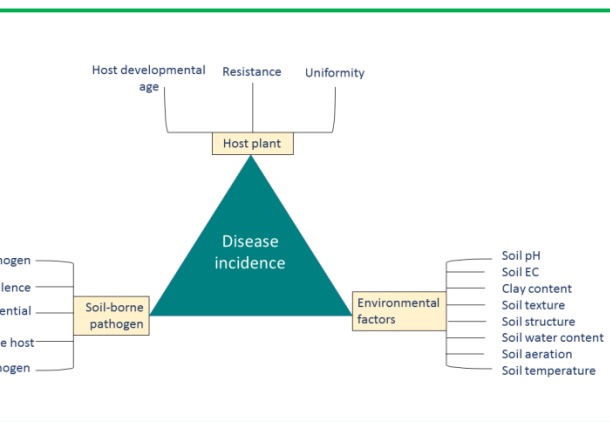


# Disease-Suppressive Soils—Beyond Food Production

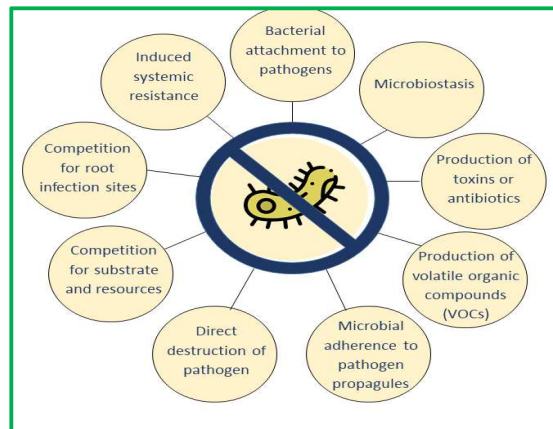
Soil disease suppression is the reduction in the incidence of soil-borne diseases even in the presence of a host plant and inoculum in the soil.

The beneficial microorganisms employ some specific functions such as antibiosis, parasitism, competition for resources, and predation.

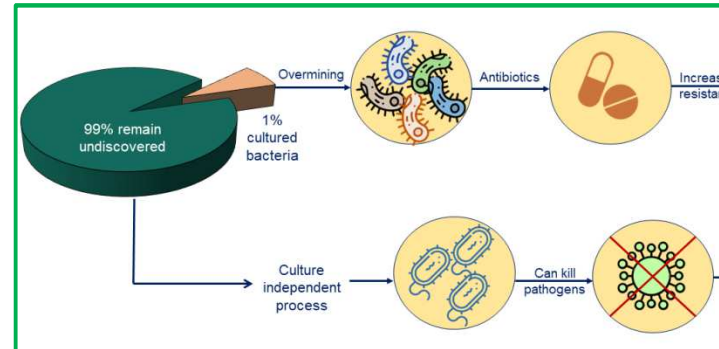
The current trend of “ecological intensification” of farms demands a promising crop protection/production with environmentally friendly practices such as maintaining and promoting disease-suppressive soils



Concept of soil disease triangle with main components and their respective factors



Possible mechanisms of disease-suppressive soils—a close view



The need for the discovery of new antibiotics from the uncultured portion of soil microbes

Unraveling soil microbes for new antibiotics

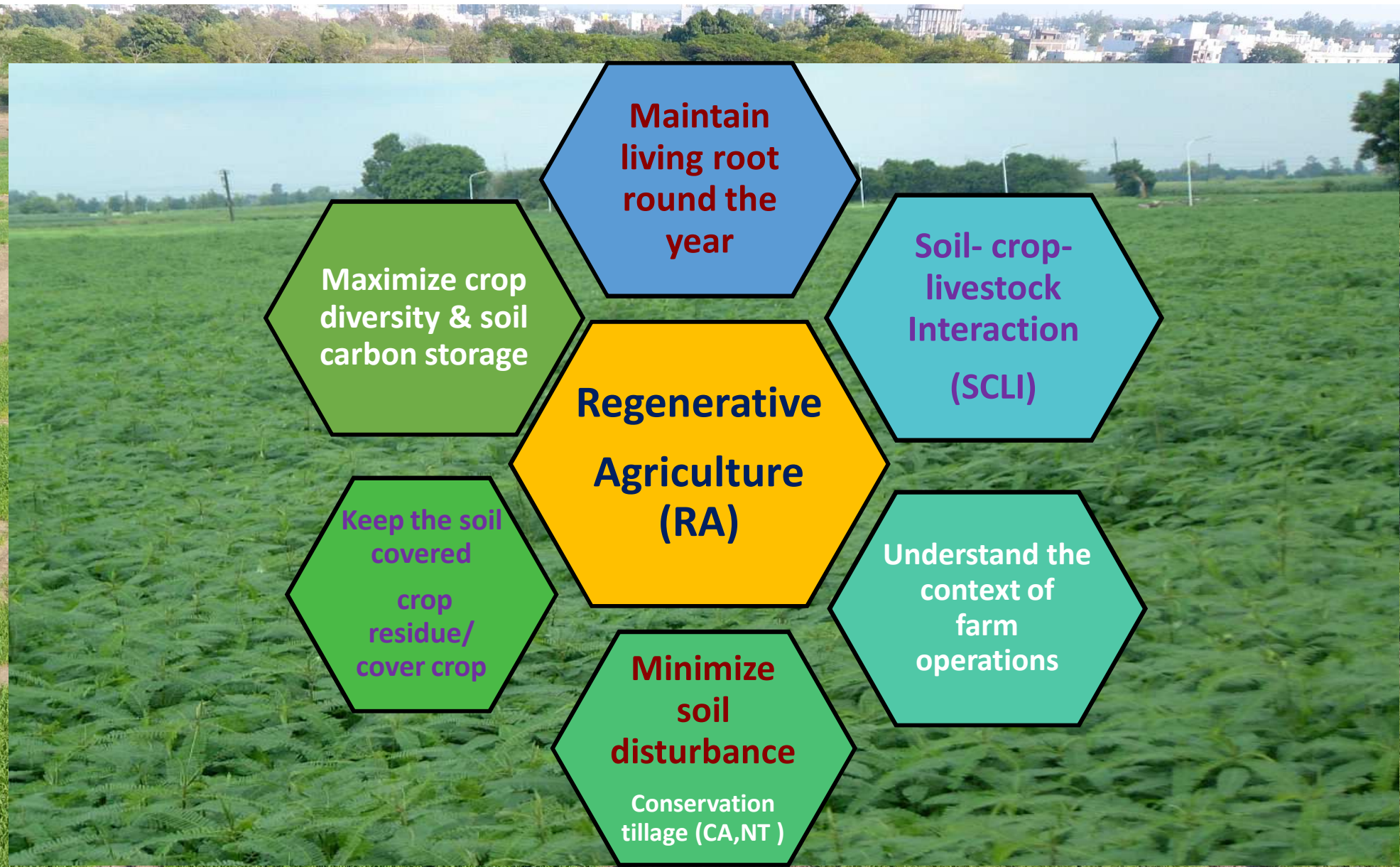
Journal of Soil Science and Plant Nutrition (2021) 21:1437–1465  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s42729-021-00451-x>

REVIEW

## Disease-Suppressive Soils—Beyond Food Production: a Critical Review

Somasundaram Jayaraman<sup>1</sup> • A.K. Naorem<sup>2</sup> • Rattan Lal<sup>3</sup> • Ram C. Dalal<sup>4</sup> • N.K. Sinha<sup>1</sup> • A.K. P.

Received: 23 October 2020 / Accepted: 21 February 2021 / Published online: 12 March 2021  
 © Sociedad Chilena de la Ciencia del Suelo 2021



To revert land degradation (soil protection); to maximize crop productivity per unit area; to enhance carbon storage – soil biodiversity, soil health; and to increase ecosystem services.



# Technology Landscape

# Conservation Agriculture

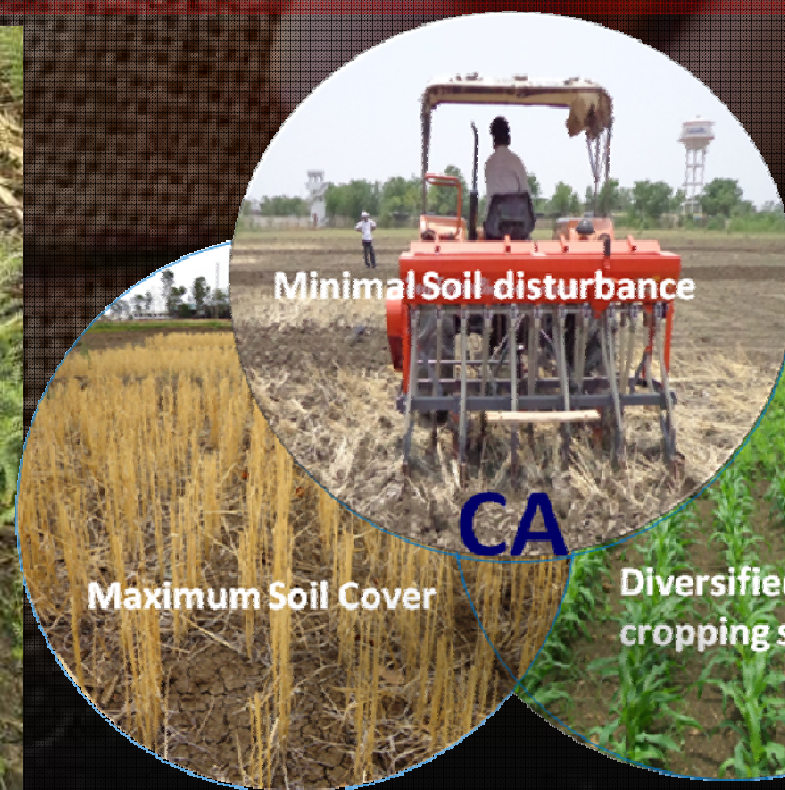
- Energy saving by up to 60 % compared to conventional farming.
- Water use efficiency increased by 15-30%.
- Soil and water run-off losses were almost 25-30% lower in ZT as compared to RT and CT. There were 5-15 and 15-30% improvement in soil moisture retention and aggregate stability, respectively,
- and 10-30 and 20-40% improvement in soil carbon and nitrogen mineralization, respectively.

Somasundaram Jayaraman  
B. C. Dalal  
Ashok K. Patra  
Anand K. Chaudhari Editors

Conservation  
Agriculture:  
A Sustainable  
Approach for Soil  
Health and Food  
Security

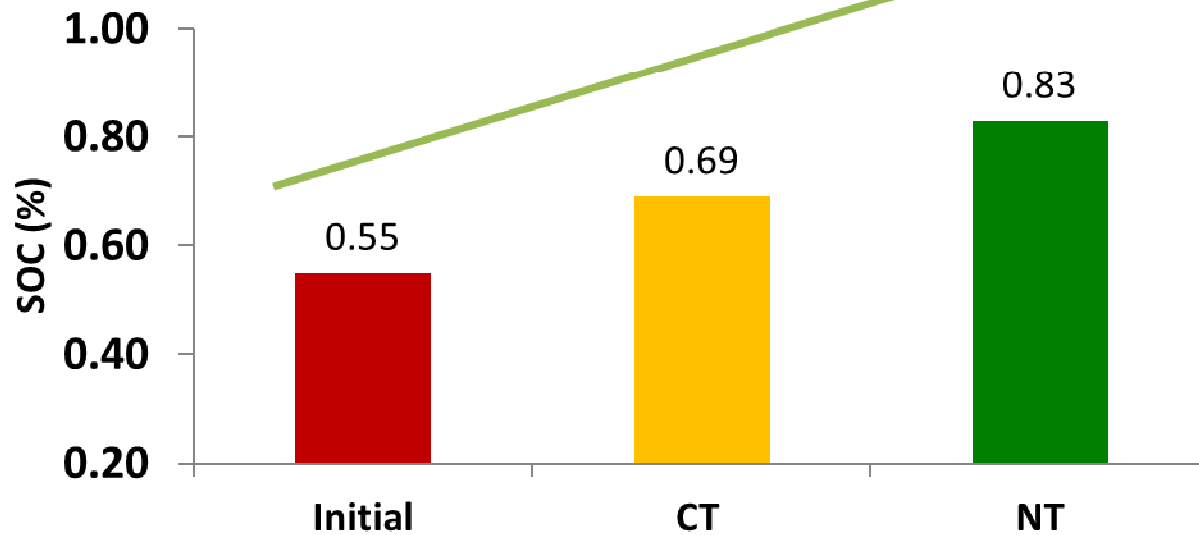
Conservation Agriculture for Sustainable  
Agriculture

Springer



# Conservation Agriculture (CA): Soil Health & Biodiversity

Soil organic carbon



er SOC recorded under NT and RT with residue retention than CT after 8 crops (2019).

offers better physical protection of C through aggregation

er SOC stock concentration observed under RT (3.58 to 4.14 t C/ha) and NT (3.58 to 4.48 t C/ha) than CT (3.54 to 3.76 t C/ha,) at surface layer, respectively.

practices have been found to add 2.30 tonnes/ha wheat residues (0.90 tonnes C/ha) in Vertisols compared to 0.70 tonnes/ha (0.30 tonnes C/ha) in farmers' fields under soybean-wheat system indicating more C addition in soil.

streaming CA technologies/capacity building; non-availability of location specific farm machinery for Vertisols/Custom hiring;

ed for strong-linkage between ICAR and SAUs and KVK for better dissemination; Need for Policy decisions and incentives

Taylor & Francis Online

Home ▶ All Journals ▶ Critical Reviews in Plant Sciences ▶ List of Issues ▶ Volume 39, Issue 3 ▶ No-Till Farming and Conservation Agricul ...

Critical Reviews in Plant Sciences  
Volume 39, 2020 - Issue 3

Submit an article | Journal homepage

1,625 Views  
5 CrossRef citations to date  
0 Altmetric

Articles  
**No-Till Farming and Conservation Agriculture – Issues, Challenges, Prospects and Benefits**  
J. Somasundaram, N. K. Sinha, Ram C. Dalal, Rattan Lal, M. Mohanty, A. K. Naorem, ...show all  
Pages 236-279 | Published online: 14 Jul 2020

Download citation | <https://doi.org/10.1080/07352689.2020.1782069> | Check for updates

# Biofertilizer Technology: Microbial consortia

## Biofertilizer Technology



**Rhizobium inoculation** of pulses gives 15-30% yield increase with residual benefits of 30-40 kg N/ha. Co-inoculation with Plant growth promoting rhizobacteria (PGPR)-Azospirillum, Pseudomonas and Bacillus, saves 20-25% nutrients (N and P).

## Mixed Consortium Biofertilizers :

Mixed biofertilizers (BIOMIX) containing a consortium of nitrogen solubilizers and Plant Growth Promoting Rhizobacteria (PGPR) were developed through the AINBB. Field trials showed the saving of nitrogen and P fertilizers. Field trials of BIOMIX in various states showed an increase of 9% - 14%.



**Family net vessel compost technology recycles kitchen waste**



# Rapid recycling of organic wastes

## Microbial Enriched Compost Production

ifferent composting techniques developed depending on the availability of raw materials

Phospho Compost

Phospho-Sulpho-Nitro Compost

Spent Wash amended Compost

Enriched Organo - Mineral Compost

Microbial enriched Municipal Solid Waste Compost

in situ decomposition of crop residues using microbial consortia to combat residue burning



Phospho-sulpho-nitro compost for improved nutrient enrichment, productivity and soil health



Bioreactor with microbial consortia to recycle food waste using rapid-composting technology



EDR AND COMPOSTR FOR RAPID DECOMPOSITION OF WASTE USING ACCEL-MICROBIAL CONSORTIA



Developed “Ekcel-CompostR” and “Ekcel-ShrdR” for rapid decomposition of waste. Applying this technology compost can be prepared in 20 days (for kitchen and household waste), 35 days (for horticulture waste) and 45 days for farm waste using thermophilic fungi and thermophilic ligno-cellulolytic bacteria, actinomycetes and fungi developed “Accel microbial consortia”.





# Apply manures to soil



Minimize this



Maximize these



Quick growing nitrogen fixing leguminous plants -  
addition of organic matter along with nitrogen

Green manure



# Minimum Fertilizers in Regenerative Agriculture

Manures and fertilizers are key for sustainable intensification of agriculture

Demand for organic produce is set to increase exponentially in both domestic and export markets, especially due to the COVID pandemic when more and more people are looking for safe and nutritious food.

Integrated use of organics and inorganics improves the nutrient use efficiencies, soil health and resilience towards climate change

Cautious management of chemical fertilizers is necessary to prevent and reverse soil degradation and enrich biodiversity

For strengthening organic farming/integrated nutrient management, concerted effort for supply of quality bio and organic fertilizers within reach of the farmers is imperative

The international  
**Code of Conduct**  
for the **sustainable use**  
and **management**  
of **fertilizers**



**Specific Integrated Nutrient  
Management, 4R Driven.**

**1. Setting the  
yield target**



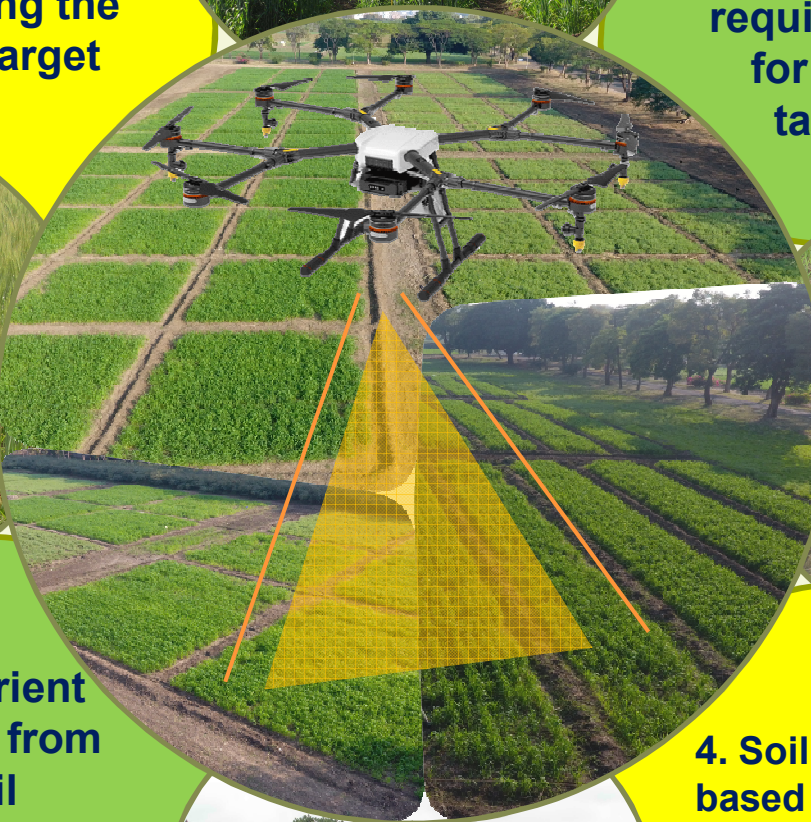
**2. Nutrient  
requirement  
for yield  
target**



**3. Nutrient  
supply from  
soil**



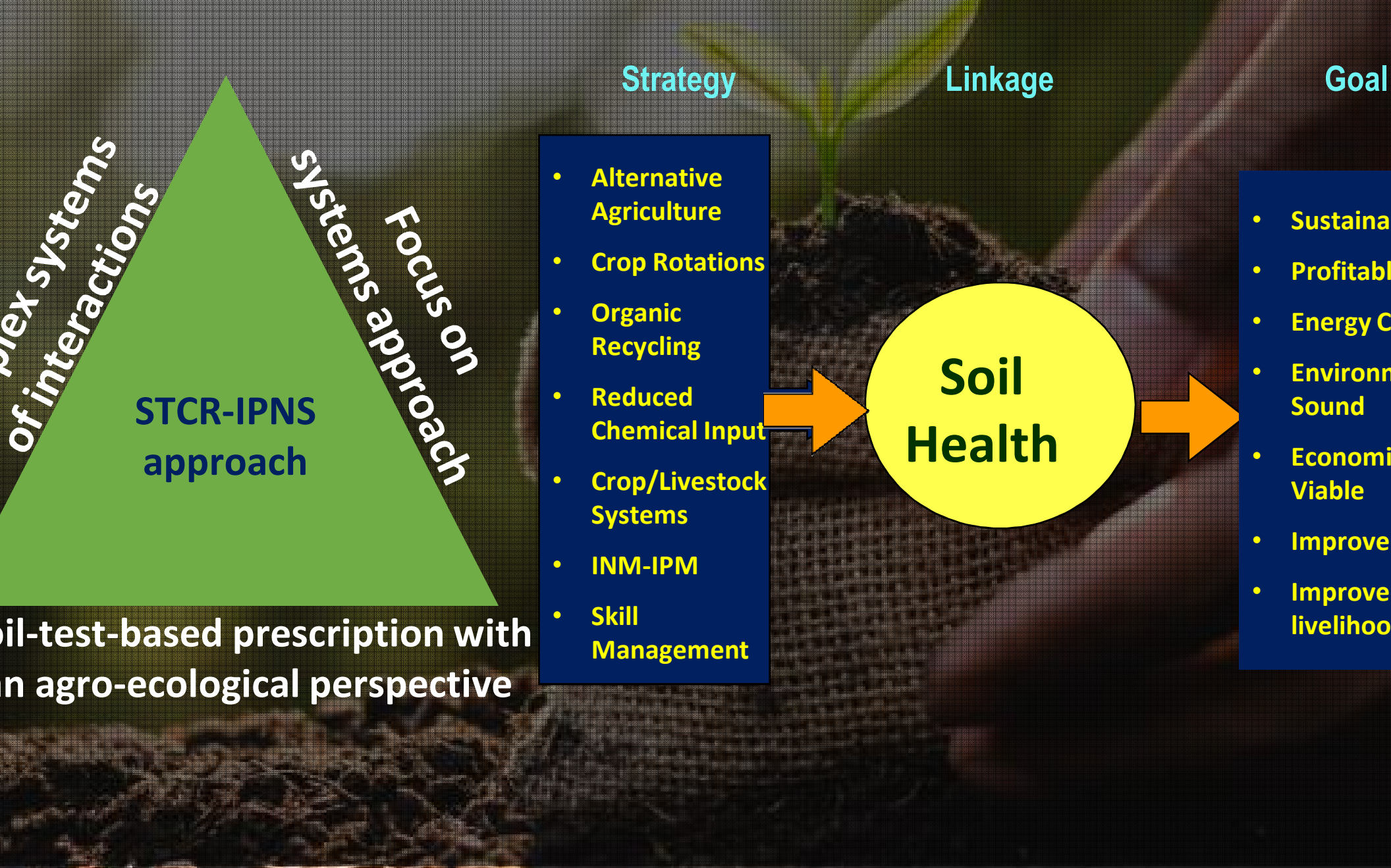
**4. Soil test  
based nutrient  
recommendation**

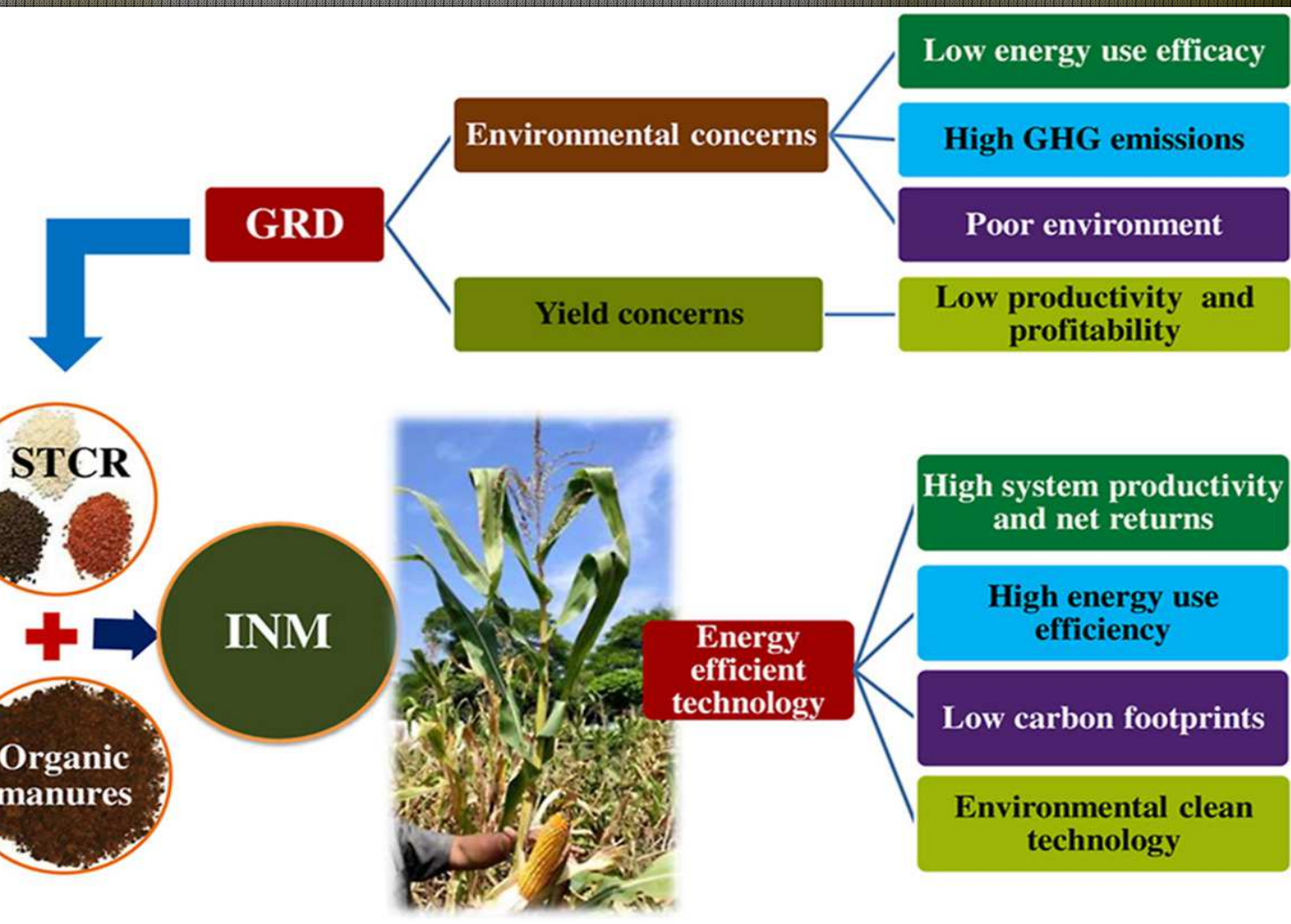


# Enhancing Nutrient Use Efficiency – LTFE Studies

Soil Type	Location	Crop	Nitrogen use efficiency (%)			
			100% N	100% NP	100% NPK	100% NPK+FYM
Inceptisol	Ludhiana	Maize	16.7	23.5	36.4	40.2
Alfisol	Palampur	Maize	6.4	34.7	52.6	63.7
Mollisol	Pantnagar	Rice	37.5	40.7	44.4	61.7
Inceptisol	Ludhiana	Wheat	32.0	50.6	63.1	67.8
Alfisol	Palampur	Wheat	1.9	35.6	50.6	72.6
Mollisol	Pantnagar	Wheat	42.4	46.1	48.4	47.9

# STCR-IPNS approach of plant nutrition is the key





**Energy budgeting and carbon footprint in a term integrated nutrient management in a cereal-legume (*Zea mays*-*Cicer*) cropping system**

- INM module (FYM+75%NPK) of increased system productivity by 17.0%, carbon efficiency (CE) by 17.0% and carbon sustainability index by 21% than GRD.
- Also reduced the energy requirement by 14%, cost of cultivation by 6% besides that CF on a spatial scale was 17% lower than GRD.



Journal of Cleaner Production

Available online 15 June 2021, 127900

In Press, Journal Pre-proof ?



Recommended articles

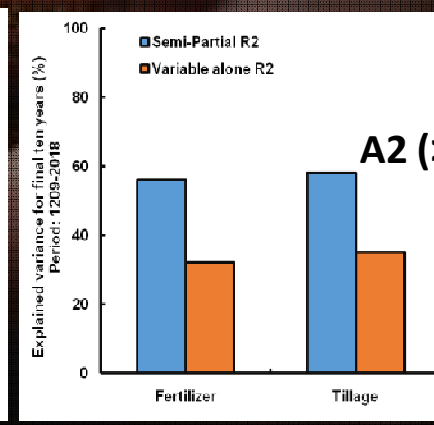
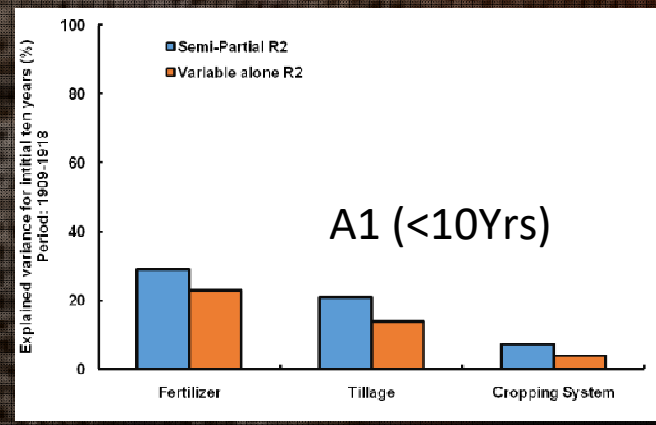
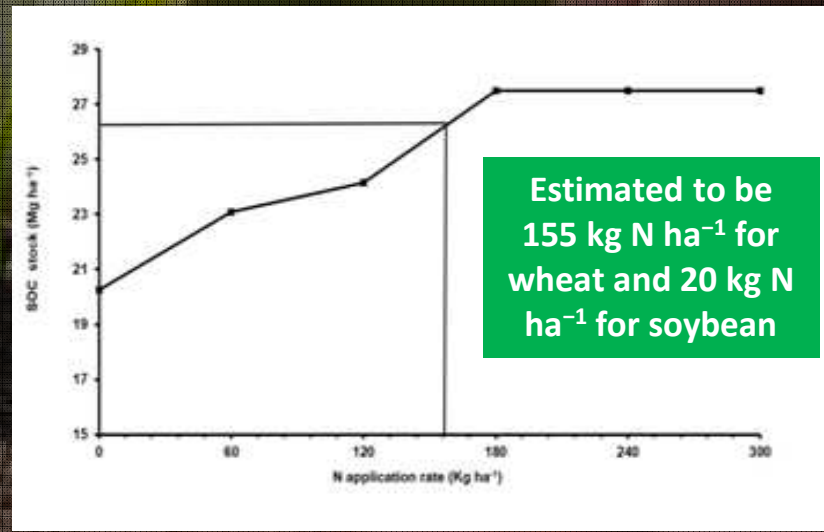
(Meena et al. 2021)

# Integrated/ Optimum N application rate for higher soil C sequestration in Vertisol Central India

Estimated soil organic C (SOC) equilibrium values and time to reach the saturation level under different treatments as simulated by the APSIM model in the Vertisol. maximum

Treatment	SOC equilibrium values/saturation values (t ha <sup>-1</sup> ) at top 30 cm depth	Steady state (year)##	SOC sequestered (Mg ha <sup>-1</sup> yr <sup>-1</sup> )
Control (No)	20.26	37	0.061
100% NPK	23.53	73	0.075
100% NPK	24.53	77	0.084
100% NPK	27.34	78	0.119
100% NPK (INM)	48.65	104	0.294

Initial SOC stock, i.e. 18 Mg ha<sup>-1</sup> was deduced from SOC equilibrium value; After 43 years: Control :-15.75 kg ha<sup>-1</sup>, 100% NPK: 155.9 kg ha<sup>-1</sup>; 100% NPK +FYM: 578 kg ha<sup>-1</sup>




Contribution of different farming management practice variations: (A1) represents the initial years of farming practice in surface soils and (A2) for long-term years

# Atlases containing *taluka* wise S and micronutrients status

## e-ATLAS

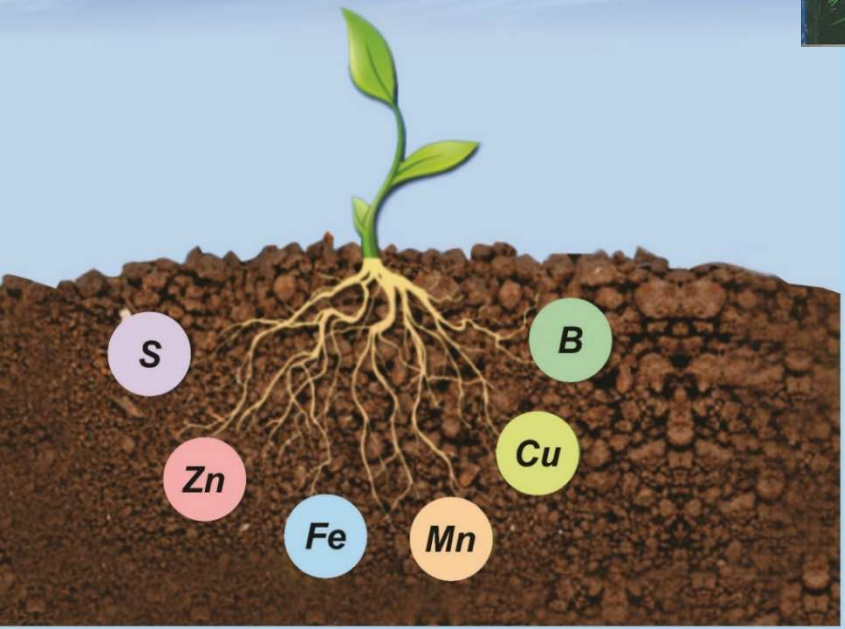
### Micronutrients in Indian Soils

*Taluka-wise Deficiencies and Management Options*



भारतीय  
ICAR

**Indian Council of Agricultural Research**  
New Delhi 110 001



### मध्य प्रदेश राज्य की मृदाओं में सूक्ष्म एवं गौण पोषक तत्वों का तालुकावार स्तर एवं प्रबंधन : एटलस

सूक्ष्म तथा गौणों में सूक्ष्म एवं गौण पोषक तत्वों एवं प्रदूषकों के स्तर पर अखिल भारतीय समन्वित परियोजना  
भा.कृ.अनु.प. - भारतीय मृदा विज्ञान संस्थान  
सतीबाग, बसिनिया रोड, भोपाल - 462 038

### ମାନ୍ଦିତ୍ରାବଳୀ

ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ନୁହେଁଇଲି ମୃତ୍ତିକାରେ ଅଣୁ ଓ ଗୌଣ ପୋଷକତତ୍ତ୍ଵର ସ୍ଥିତି ଏବଂ ପରିଚାଳନା

ଭା.କୃ.ଅନୁ.ପ. - ଜାତୀୟ ଧାନ ଉଦ୍‌ଭେଦନା ପ୍ରଦୁଷଣ, ବଚନ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଦୁଗ୍ଧ ଓ ଚୈଷ୍ଟିକ ବିଭାଗ, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ଵର, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ମୃତ୍ତିକା ଓ ଉଦ୍‌ଭେଦନ ଅଣୁ ଓ ଗୌଣ ପୋଷକତତ୍ତ୍ଵ ଏବଂ ପ୍ରଦୁଷଣତା ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଭାରତୀୟ ଆନ୍ଦୋଳନ ଉଦ୍‌ଭେଦନ ପ୍ରଦାନ ଭା.କୃ.ଅନୁ.ପ. - ଭାରତୀୟ ମୃତ୍ତିକା ବିଭାଗ, ଭୋପାଳ, ମଧ୍ୟପ୍ରଦେଶ

### हिमाचल प्रदेश राज्य की गौण पोषक तत्वों का स्तर

सूक्ष्म तथा गौणों में सूक्ष्म एवं गौण पोषक तत्वों अखिल भारतीय समन्वित परियोजना  
सूक्ष्म तथा गौणों में सूक्ष्म एवं गौण पोषक तत्वों अखिल भारतीय समन्वित परियोजना  
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भारतीय कृषि अनुसंधान परिषद, भारतीय

### ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀਆਂ ਮਿੱਟੀਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਗੰਧਕ ਅਤੇ ਲਘੂ ਤੱਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਥਿਤੀ - ਬਲਾਕ ਪੱਧਰੀ ਐਟਲਸ

ਮਿੱਟੀ ਅਤੇ ਬੂਟਿਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੂਖਮ, ਸੈਕੰਡਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਮੁੱਖ ਤੱਤਾਂ ਤੇ ਸਰਵ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਸਮਲਿਤ ਖੋਜ ਪ੍ਰੋਜੈਕਟ  
ਭੂਮੀ ਵਿਗਿਆਨ ਵਿਭਾਗ, ਪੰਜਾਬ ਐਗਰੀਕਲਚਰਲ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ, ਲੁਧਿਆਣਾ-141004  
ਆਈ ਸੀ ਏ ਆਰ - ਭਾਰਤੀ ਮਿੱਟੀ ਵਿਗਿਆਨ ਸੰਸਥਾਨ, ਡੇਪਾਚ-462038  
2020

### ગુજરાત રાજ્યની જમીનોમાં સૂક્ષ્મ અને ગૌણ પોષકતત્ત્વોનું તાલુકાવાર પ્રમાણ અને વ્યવસ્થાપન : એટલાસ

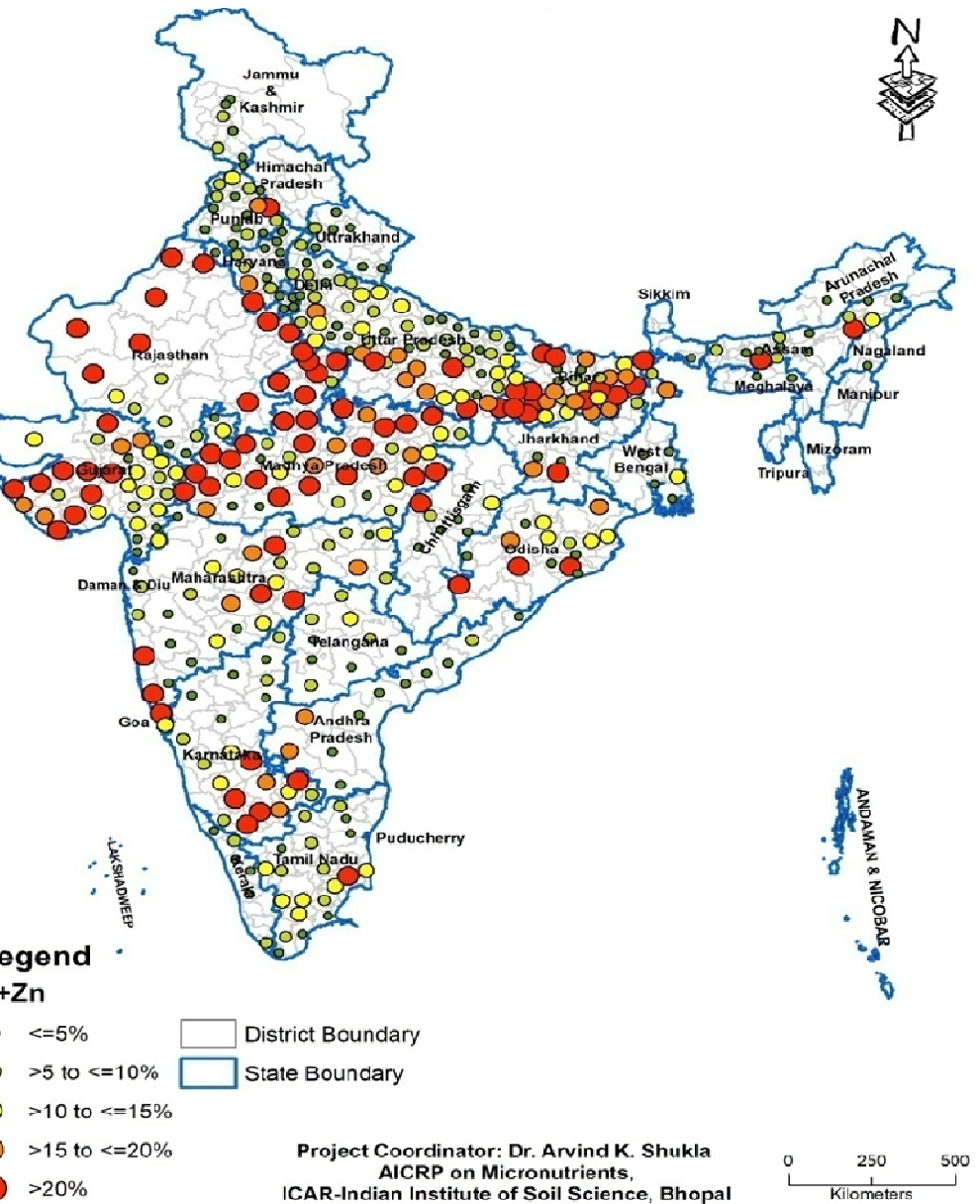
સૂક્ષ્મ - ગુજરાત વિજ્ઞાન સંસ્થા, જામનગર પ્રમાણ

માઇક્રોન્યુટ્રિયન્ટ રીસર્ચ પ્રોજેક્ટ (આઇ.સી.એ.આર.)  
આણંદ કૃષિ યુનિવર્સિટી  
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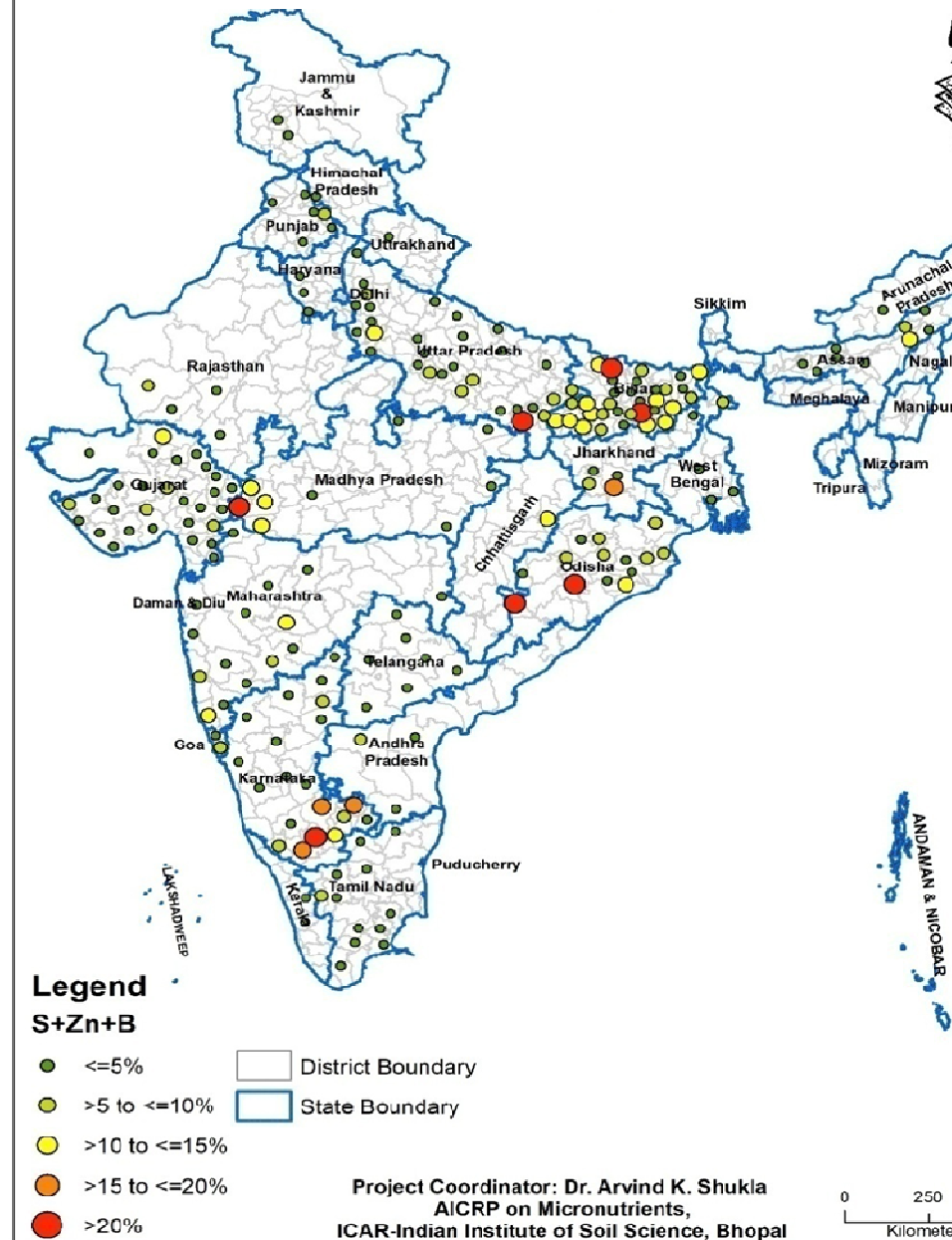
AICRP



## Multimicronutrient (S+Zn) deficiency status in soils of India-2020



## Multimicronutrient (S+Zn+B) deficiency status in soils of India-2020



# Generalized transition zone of critical limits for micronutrients in soil

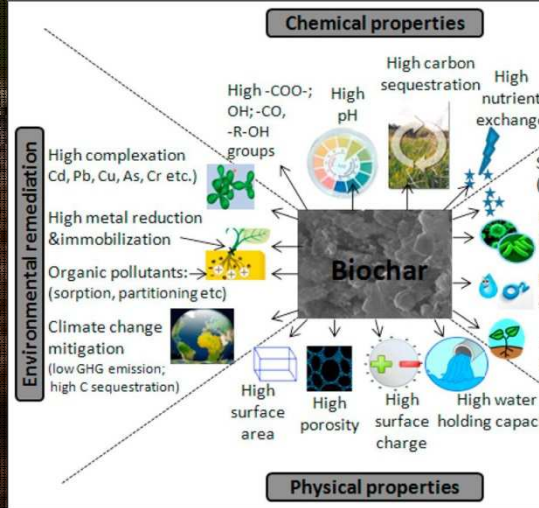
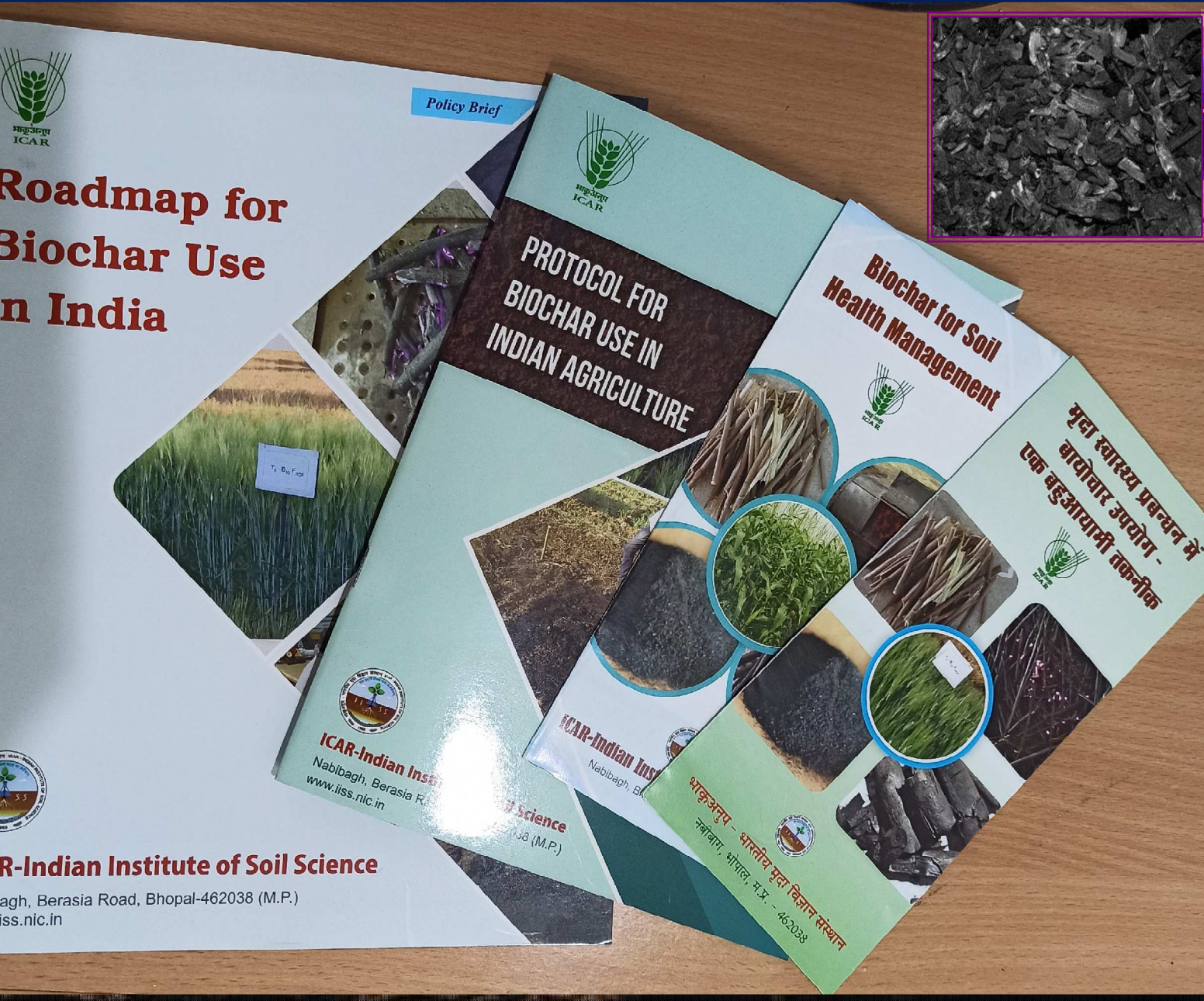
Critical limit transition zones	HWS-B	DTPA-Zn	DTPA-Fe	DTPA-Mn	DTPA-Cu
Severely deficient	$\leq 0.2$	$\leq 0.3$	$\leq 2.5$	$\leq 1.0$	$\leq 0.5$
Deficient	0.2–0.5	0.3–0.6	2.5 – 4.5	1.0-3.0	0.5-1.0
Moderately deficient	0.5–0.7	0.6–0.9	4.5 – 6.5	3.0-5.0	1.0-1.5
Marginally sufficient	0.7–0.9	0.9–1.2	6.5 – 8.5	5.0-7.0	1.5-2.0
Sufficient	0.9-1.10	1.2-1.8	8.5-10.5	7.0-9.0	2.0-3.0
High	$> 1.10$	$>1.8$	$> 10.5$	$> 9.0$	$> 3.0$

limits are inclusive

Based on >1465 experiments conducted at cultivators' field to derive critical limits and transition zones

*Shukla and Behera, 2022*

# Biochar for C-sequestration and soil health



- Soil structure, soil water, soil aggregate stability
- Soil GHG
- Soil nutrient dynamics
- Soil fungal diversity
- Soil microbial population

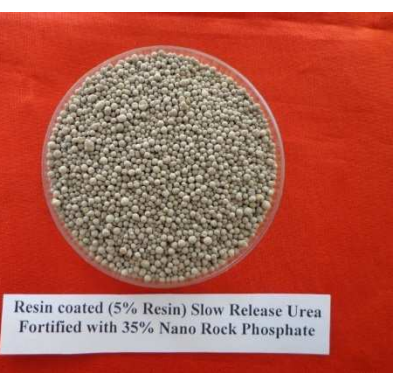
Climate proof

- Integrated Farming Systems
- Integrated Nutrient and Pest Mana

*For sustainability and inco*



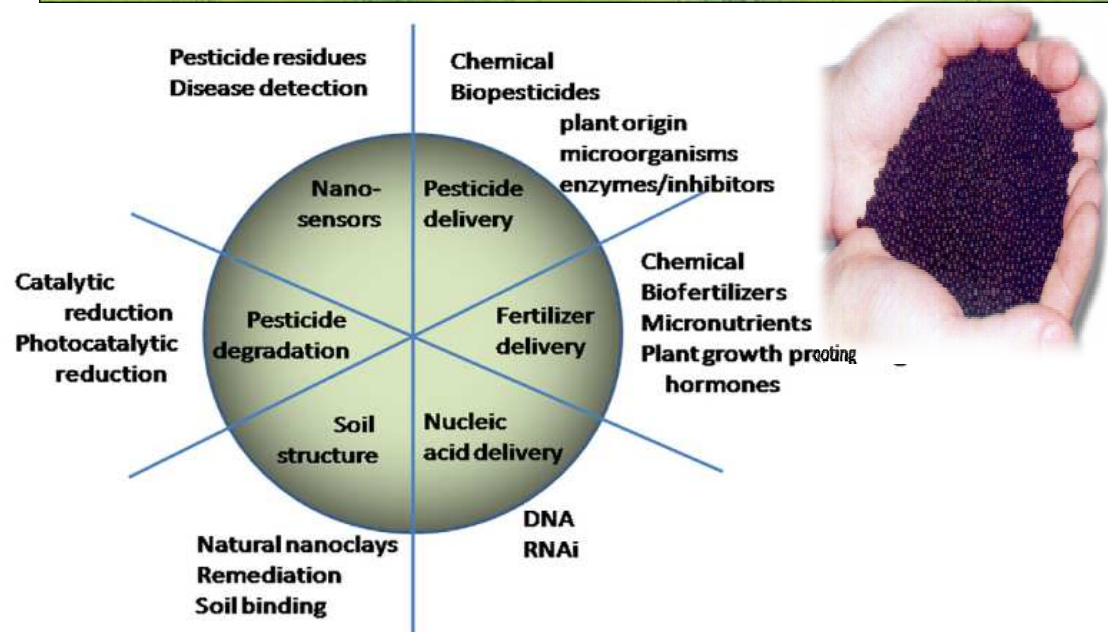
# Nanotechnology: Possible Areas of Innovations for Future Regenerative Agriculture



## MULTILOCATION TRIAL OF NANO ROCK PHOSPHATE BY ICAR-IISS, Bhopal

Nano-rock phosphate - A Potential phosphorus fertilizer derived from rock phosphate using nano-technology.

Nano-Rock Phosphate (NRP) is equally good as DAP on soybean yields



# ICAR-ISS – ICRAF Collaboration on Soil Spectroscopy

INTERNATIONAL WEBINAR



## SOIL SPECTROSCOPY

An Emerging Technique for Rapid Soil Health Assessment

OCTOBER 2020  
10.00 AM – 4.30 PM IST (+5.30 GMT)

Registration link: 

Jointly Organized by

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SOIL SCIENCE, BHOPAL, INDIA  
&  
WORLD AGROFORESTRY (ICRAF), NAIROBI, KENYA



- The Mid-infrared technology has been validated for the estimation of the soil organic carbon, pH, clay, silt and sand in Alfisols, Inceptisols and Vertisols of India. It may be used for rapid analysis of such parameters in these soil types.



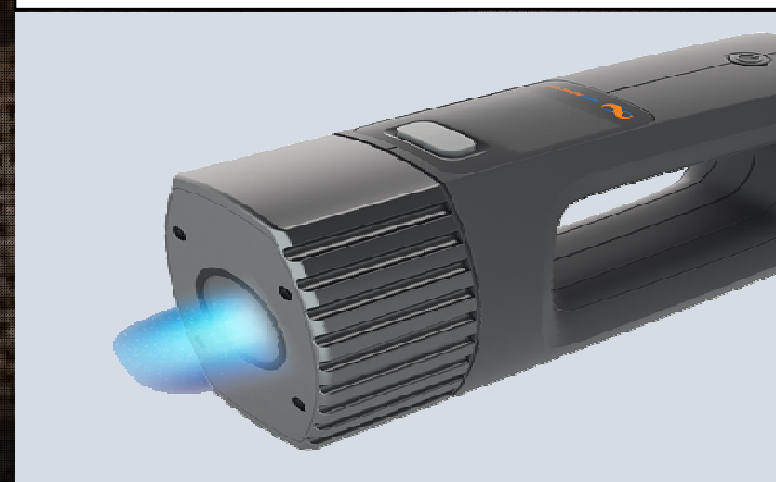
Alpha-FT MIR Spectrometer



Capacity building



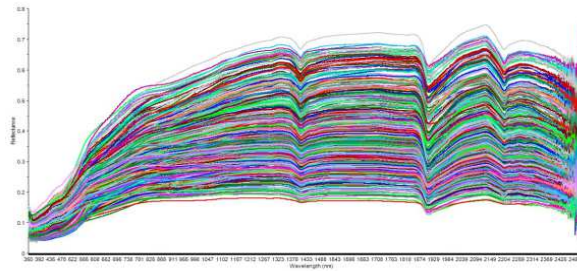
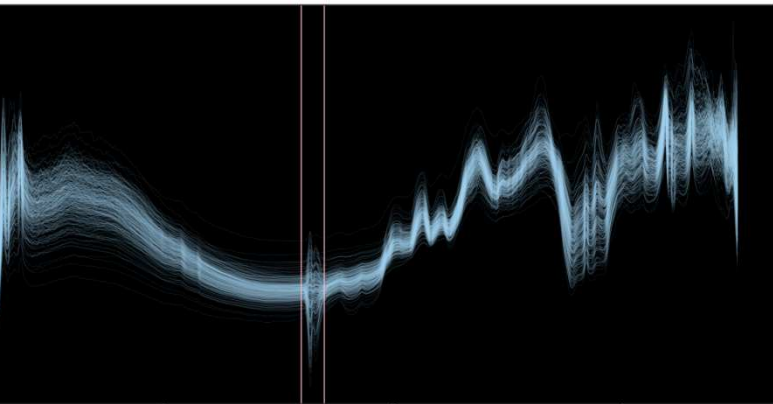
Portable XRF



Neo-spectra Soil NIR scanner

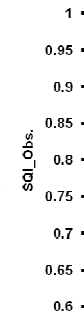
# Spectral analysis of soil properties (NIR and MIR) and Library

Raw MIR spectra

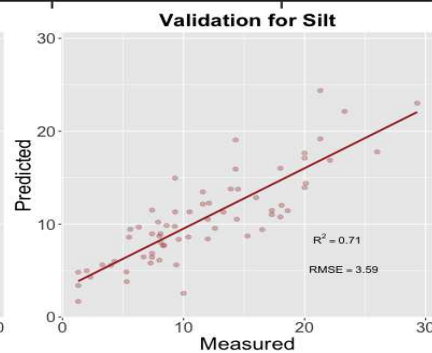
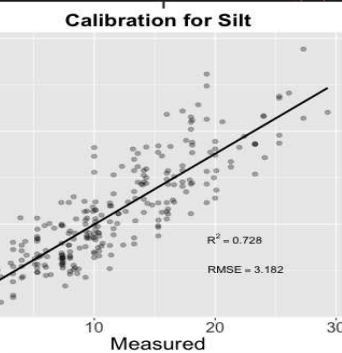
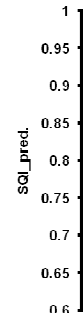


**Spectral Signatures from soils collected from central Indian Vertisols (1200 samples)**

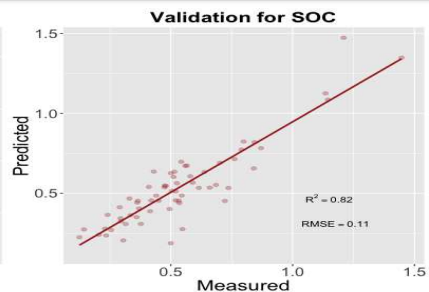
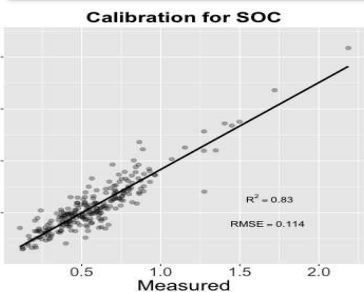
Scattergram (SQI\_Obs.)



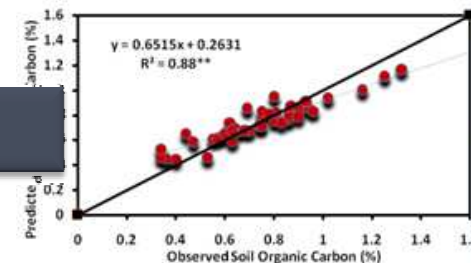
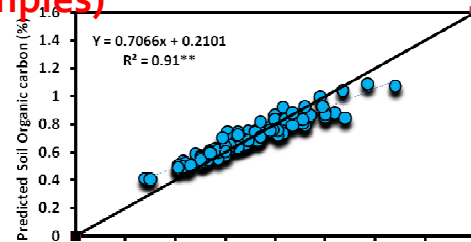
Scattergram (SQI\_Pred.)



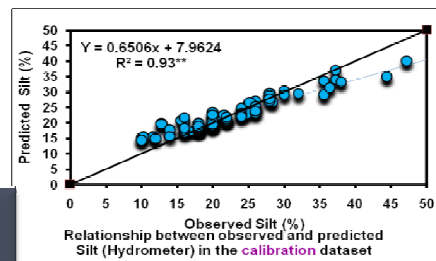
**Clay content (%)**



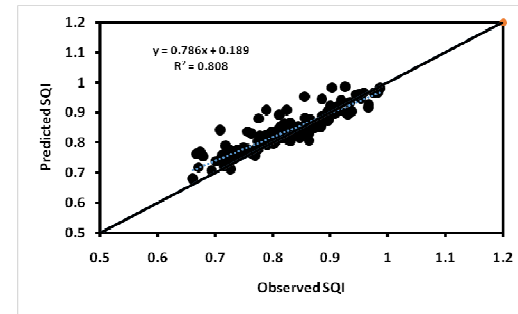
**Soil Organic Carbon concentration (%)**



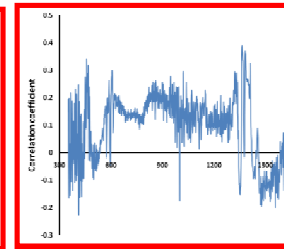
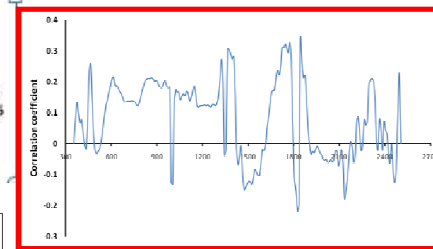
Relationship between observed and predicted soil organic C (Walkley and Black) in the validation dataset



Relationship between observed and predicted Silt (Hydrometer) in the calibration dataset



**Relationships between laboratory SQI and spectral based SQI**



**Individual band vs SQI correlation**

# Alternatives to Plastic Mulches: Potential options



Primary use of plastics in agriculture as mulch, shade nets, lining, micro-irrigation, etc. and also indicated the associated environmental issues with the use of conventional plastic materials

Organic mulch materials are in use since before the invention of plastics, yet stand as a viable options for alternatives to plastic mulches

## Road map and actionable points:

- Organic fibre materials and crop residues
- Mulching with paper sheets or vegetable oil stained paper, cellulose fibre and wool fibre can be other good options
- Poly acrylic acids (PLAs) based bio-polymers because of their biodegradable nature.
- In-depth study is essential under different mulches on soil properties/hydrothermal properties.
- In-depth study is required on the key mechanisms involved in biodegradation, active plastic degrading organisms, and the fate of resultant micro-particles in the soil.
- Urgent need to identify efficient microorganisms that can immediately biodegrade plastic film mulch (PFM) after use is paramount in developing biodegradable films and bioremediation to solve the problem of pollution.
- Soil protection law or legislation is essential to safeguard soil resources and environment from serious threat of plastic mulch

INTERNATIONAL WEBINAR

**Alternatives to Plastics for Sustainable Soil and Environmental Health**

DATE: 30 DECEMBER 2020  
TIME: 10.30 AM – 1.30 PM

REGISTRATION ID: 951-8108-9228, PASSCODE: MULCH  
REGISTER AT: <https://zoom.us/j/95181089228?pwd=Z2M2TlZ2SDVZYWlZfjMURjFCUNGMOT09>

Organized by

ICAR-INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SOIL SCIENCE BHOPAL

**Policy Brief**

**ALTERNATIVES TO PLASTICS FOR SUSTAINABLE SOIL AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**

ICAR-Indian Institute of Soil Science  
Nabibagh, Berasia Road, Bhopal-462038 (M.P.)  
(ISO 9001:2015)



# Drip irrigation and fertigation: More crop per drop



## Comparative efficiency of different irrigation methods

Conventional	30-40 % (Flood and Furrow)
Sprinkler	40 - 60 %
Drip	90-95 %
N use efficiency	85-90%

- Drip irrigation – 2.5 to 3.0 times more area than conventional.
- Sprinkler irrigation – 1.5 to 2.0 times more area than conventional.

### Water Resources Management - Reduce, Recycle, Reuse, Recharge (4R)

- Increase in yield 12-84%
- WUE 17-65%
- Fert saving 20-25%
- Net return 10-130%

# Increase SOM, population & diversity of soil biota

Fertilization (INM, 4R)

No tillage

Higher plant diversity

Irrigation (MI esp. dry areas)

IPM

Organic amendments

Green manure (cover crops)

Crop rotation

Liming

## Regeneration of Soil Health

Uncovered soil

Burning (fire)

Heavy machinery

Erosion

Acidification

Monoculture

Intensive tillage

Pesticides, soil contaminants

# Decrease SOM, population & diversity of soil biota



# Conclusion & way forward

- ✓ Future agriculture is in crisis in the face of rapid soil degradation, collapse of soil health and extinction of biodiversity.
- ✓ For managed soils, it should be managed mimicking nature's way to produce and enhance soil biodiversity, health and sustainability and to prevent soil degradation following the tenet of regenerative agriculture.
- ✓ For healthy soils in natural ecosystems, protect them from conversion and soil degradation
- ✓ For degraded soils, mitigate soil threats, restore and improve soil health
- ✓ Mechanisms to develop regenerative soil utilization – site specific models
- ✓ Promote best agricultural practices and mass awareness for RA.
- ✓ Policy implementation for incentives and rewards for regenerative agriculture and creation of ecosystem services. Differentiate farmers who protect soils from others.



# FAO CONFERRED KING BHUMIBOL WORLD SOIL DAY AWARD 2020 TO ICAR-IISS



The Institute has received the prestigious “King Bhumibol World Soil Day Award 2020” from FAO Rome for outstanding role for Mass Awareness Campaign on soil health enhancement in India on 5 Dec 2020.



# UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030)

**THE SCIENCE  
BEHIND  
ECOSYSTEM  
RESTORATION**

**REIMAGINE  
RECREATE  
RESTORE**  
#GenerationRestoration

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY | UN environment programme 50 1972-2022 | PAKISTAN 2021

The banner features a central white logo consisting of three wavy lines with a heart shape above them. The background is a vibrant blue underwater scene with various fish and coral. At the bottom, there are logos for World Environment Day, the UN Environment Programme's 50th anniversary (1972-2022), and Pakistan 2021.

# THANK YOU