

## **Celebration of the World Soil Day-2021**

An awareness programme, on the occasion of the World Soil Day, involving scientists and academicians, state government officials and farmers was organized jointly by the Division of Soil Science and Agricultural Chemistry, ICAR-Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), New Delhi and the Delhi Chapter of the Indian Society of Soil Science (ISSS) in association with Gram Vikas Samiti, Mandora at Mandora, Sonipat on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2021. Among the dignitaries, Dr. B.S. Tomar, Joint Director (Extension), ICAR-IARI; Shri Lalit Siwach, Deputy Commissioner, Sonipat; Dr. Devendra Singh, Deputy Director (Agriculture), Sonipat; and distinguished scientists of ICAR-IARI were present in the programme. The experts from different disciplines of ICAR-IARI delivered talks on several topics namely, soil salinity, soil quality and health, organic farming, and innovation in horticultural crops for better human health.

Addressing the gathering, Dr. R.N. Pandey, Head, Division of Soil Science and Agricultural Chemistry, ICAR-IARI informed that every year the World Soil Day is celebrated on 5<sup>th</sup> December. He highlighted the importance of maintaining healthy soil for high productivity and human well-being. During his address, he emphasized on the status of soil degradation and informed that about 120 M ha land is degraded in India. He also urged upon the audience, including farmers to adopt appropriate scientific soil management strategies to achieve the goal of restoring 26 M ha of degraded land in India by 2030, as envisaged by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India.

On behalf of the Delhi Chapter of the ISSS, Dr. Sarvendra Kumar, Secretary, Delhi Chapter briefed the significance of celebrating the World Soil Day. He highlighted that raising awareness among the farmers and citizens about the importance of soil health is the prime objective of such programme. He also mentioned that this year the theme of World Soil Day celebration is "Halt soil salinization, boost soil productivity".

Earlier, Mr. D.P. Goyal, Chairman, Gram Vikas Samiti, Mandora in his address highlighted that the Gram Vikas Samiti has taken initiative of plantation activity in the village and the Sonipat district of Haryana as well.

Shri Lalit Siwach, Deputy Commissioner, Sonipat in his address mentioned that district administration would provide all sorts of assistance to the farmers to promote scientific agriculture in the district. Dr. Devendra Singh, Deputy Director (Agriculture), Sonipat emphasised on the ongoing schemes of the Government of Haryana in connection with agriculture and soil health management.

Dr. B.S. Tomar, Chief Guest of the programme in his address highlighted about the importance of soil health on the quality of horticultural and vegetable crops vis-à-vis human and animal health. He also emphasized the importance of crop diversification for profitable agriculture and improvement of soil fertility. In total, 200 farmers joined the programme.



Dr. R.N. Pandey, Head, SS&AC, ICAR-IARI, New Delhi addressing the gathering at Mandora, Sonipat



Dr. B.S. Tomar, Jt. Director (Extension), ICAR-IARI, New Delhi addressing the gathering at Madora, Sonipat



Farmers attending the programme at Mandora, Sonipat