

SOIL HEALTH CARD SCHEME HELPED INDIA ACHIEVE SURPLUS CAPACITY IN FOODGRAIN PRODUCTION: SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR

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Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare

Soil Health Card Scheme helped India achieve surplus capacity in foodgrain production: Shri Narendra Singh Tomar

Completion of five years of Soil Health Card Scheme observed

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The Union Minister for Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare, Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Shri Narendra Singh Tomar has said the Soil Health Card Scheme has helped India achieve surplus capacity in foodgrain production. Inaugurating the National Workshop on Soil Health Card (SHC) Day here today, he said the soil health is vital to boosting agricultural production.

The Minister said the vagaries of weather pose a new challenge before the country. The spurt in onion prices last year arose due to unseasonal rains. The agricultural scientists are constantly engaged in finding solutions. Shri Tomar said, "Our schemes should not remain confined to files, farmers should gain out of it. I am of the firm belief our farmers will overcome this challenge heeding to the advice of agricultural scientists and soil analysis. More than 11 crore SHCs have been issued in two phases since the scheme was launched five years ago. Government is making efforts to set up Soil Testing Labs (STLs) on the patterns of Model Village. Still much more needs to be done."

Shri Tomar informed that under this scheme Soil Health Cards are provided to all farmers at an interval of 2 years. These cards contain status of soil health and also soil test based nutrients recommendations for important crops. He appealed to the farmers to adopt the recommendations of Soil Health Cards for efficient use of fertilizers and improving farm income.

Shri Tomar said the Government will soon launch a Tilahan Mission to make the country self-reliant in oil seed production. In recent years, following shortage of pulses, the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has called for focus on pulses production and today India has attained self-sufficiency in pulses as well, he added.

Speaking on the occasion, Secretary, Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare, Shri Sanjay Agarwal said the SHC is today among the largest Government schemes. SHC will help in doubling farmers income, he said.

The day-long Workshop started with the welcome address by Special Secretary (AC&FW). Subsequently Joint Secretary (INM) presented an overview of Soil Health Card Scheme and its

implementation in different states ([Click here to see Presentation](#)). Head, Soil Science, Indian Agriculture Research Institute informed about significance of integrated nutrient management. Farmers' representatives and Agricultural officers from different states shared their experiences on Soil Health Card and Model Village programme. Presentations were made by Senior officers from Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Jharkhand, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh and Meghalaya, besides ICAR on Integrated Nutrient Management. IFFCO also made a presentation on company's initiatives about soil health card Programme. The event was also addressed by Secretary, Department of Fertilizers. About 300 farmers from different states participated in the workshop.

The Soil Health Card Day commemorates the day Soil Health Card Scheme was launched by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on February 19, 2015 at Suratgarh, Rajasthan. During cycle –I (2015-17), 10.74 crore Soil Health Cards and during cycle – II (2017-19), 11.74 crore Soil Health Cards have been distributed to farmers. The Government has spent more than Rs.700 crores on the SHC scheme since its launch five years ago.

So far 429 new static Soil Testing Labs (STLs), 102 new mobile STLs, 8752 mini STLs and 1562 village level STLs have been sanctioned under the scheme since 2014-15. Out of these sanctioned labs, 129 new static Soil Testing Labs (STLs), 86 new mobile STLs, 6498 mini STLs and 179 village level STLs are already established.

The objectives of the Soil Health Card (SHC) scheme are to issue soil health cards to farmers every two years so as to provide a basis to address nutritional deficiencies in fertilization practices. Soil testing is developed to promote soil test based on nutrient management. Soil testing reduces cultivation cost by application of right quantity of fertilizer. It ensures additional income to farmers by increase in yields and it also promotes sustainable farming.

The scheme has been introduced to assist State Governments to issue SHCs to all farmers in the country. SHC provides information to farmers on nutrient status of their soil along with recommendation on appropriate dosage of nutrients to be applied for improving soil health and its fertility.

Deterioration of soil chemical, physical and biological health is considered as one of the reasons for stagnation of agricultural productivity in India.

The Government is also implementing the Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS) scheme and promoting customized and fortified fertilizers for balanced use of fertilizers. So far, 21 fertilizers have been brought under the NBS scheme. Presently, 35 customized and 25 fortified fertilizers notified by the Government are in use.

During 2019-20, a pilot project 'Development of Model Villages' has been taken up where soil samples collection has been taken up at individual farm holding with farmer's participation instead of sample collection at grids.

Under the pilot project, one village per block is adopted for holding based soil testing and organization of larger number of demonstrations up to a maximum number of 50 demonstrations (1 ha each) for each adopted village.

So far 6,954 villages have been identified by the States in which against the target of 26.83 lakh samples / Soil Health Cards, 21.00 lakh samples have been collected, 14.75 lakh samples analysed and 13.59 lakh cards distributed to farmers. Apart from this, 2,46,979 demonstrations and 6,951 Farmer Melas approved to States.

During the next five years, it is proposed to cover four lakh villages under individual farm holding soil sampling & testing, organize 2.5 lakh demonstrations, setting up of 250 village level soil testing labs, strengthening 200 soil testing labs with Intensively Coupled Plasma (ICP) spectrophotometer and promotion of micro-nutrients in 2 lakh hectare area.

Soil Health Card provides two sets of fertilizer recommendations for six crops including recommendations of organic manures. Farmers can also get recommendations for additional crops on demand. They can also print the card as their own from SHC portal. SHC portal has farmers database of both the cycles and is available in 21 languages for the benefit of the farmers.

A 2017 study by the National Productivity Council (NPC) found that the SHC scheme has promoted sustainable farming and led to a decrease of use of chemical fertilizer application in the range of 8-10%. Besides, overall increase in the yield of crops to the tune of 5-6% was reported due to application of fertilizer and micro nutrients as per recommendations available in the Soil Health Cards.

Awareness among farmers is being stepped up by coordinated efforts of Departments of Agriculture Cooperation and Farmers Welfare, Fertilisers backed by technology and network of Krishi Vigyan Kendras of Indian Council of Agriculture Research. Farmers can track their samples, print their Cards etc at Common Service Centres also at the Farmers Corner of www.soilhealth.gov.in and fulfil the mantra of Swastha Dhara to Khet Hara (if the soil is healthy, the fields will be green).

APS/PK

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