

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3803
ANSWERED ON:19.12.2005
SOIL TESTING LABORATORIES
Sippiparai Shri A. Ravichandran

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the analysis of soil samples collected from seven major States show that the fertility of the soils is deteriorating at a rapid pace threatening crop productivity;
- (b) if so, the details of research work conducted by scientists on the crop species of the 12 different plant nutrients;
- (c) whether the Government has any proposal to establish region-wise/district-wise soil testing laboratories on affordable price of farmers and set up ongoing basis programmes for soil fertility; and
- (d) if so, the details in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA)

(a) & (b): Indian council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) All India Coordinated Projects on 'Soil test crop response' and 'Macro, secondary and pollutant elements' reveals that Indian Soils under intensive agriculture are now showing signs of fatigue, especially in Indo-Gangetic plain covering States like Punjab, Haryana, U.P., Delhi, Bihar, Jharkhand & West Bengal. The status of available Nitrogen (N) in the country is in general low, Phosphorus (P) low to medium and Potassium (K) medium to high. About 41 % soils are deficient in Sulphur. The deficiency is more pronounced in oilseeds and pulses compared to cereals. The deficiencies of Zinc, Iron, Manganese and Copper are also to the tune of 49, 12, 5 and 3 per cent respectively. The Zinc deficiency is more widespread on coarse textured, calcareous or alkaline and low organic carbon alluvial soils of Indo-Gangetic plains covering rice-wheat system. The Boron deficiencies are coming up in a big way in red, lateritic and calcareous soils of eastern region covering Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, West Bengal and Assam. The single micronutrient deficiency is more common while multiple nutrient deficiencies are in isolated areas in most of the States.

(c) & (d): At present, there are 551 Soil Testing Laboratories in the country (426 Static and 125 Mobile) with annual analyzing capacity of 6.75 million soil samples. The Government is providing financial assistance for setting up/strengthening of soil testing laboratories in the country through State Governments under Centrally Sponsored Scheme - 'Balanced & Integrated Use of Fertilizers' under Macro Management of Agriculture. The Government is promoting Integrated Nutrient Management (INM) based on soil test for balanced and judicious use of fertilizer along with organic resources like green manure, farm yard manure, compost, phospho compost, vermin compost, bio-fertilizer etc.

ICAR has also developed soil test based Balanced and Integrated Nutrient Management Packages (INMP) for different crops/cropping systems under various agro ecological regions of the country. The council is also imparting training to farmers on INMP and demonstrating its usefulness on their fields.