



In the Name of Allah, the beneficent, the Merciful

Soil Science News

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Editor: Dr. Munazza Yousra

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Head Office: Land Resources Research Institute, National Agricultural Research Centre, Islamabad Pakistan

Editorial: Post-Flood Soil Management

In the wake of recent flooding in Pakistan, soil health and management have become critical for food security, as saturated fields, eroded topsoil, and widespread nutrient leaching threaten next season yields. Post-flood soil care must prioritize rapid assessment of damage, re-establishment of soil structure, and restoration of soil fertility, drying and aeration of compacted soils, minimal distance to prevent further erosion, and timely application of organic amendments (compost, farmyard manure) to rebuild soil organic matter and microbial activity. Replenishing essential nutrients through guided soil testing, balanced fertilization, along with residue retention and cover cropping where feasible, can accelerate soil recovery. It may help in improving water infiltration and reducing susceptibility to future floods. Involving farmers, extension services, and local researchers to monitor soil physical and biological indicators will be key to sustaining food production and safeguarding livelihoods in flood-affected regions.

Seminar on Bridging the Gap from Research to Environmental Action

The Department of Soil and Environmental Sciences, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Poonch Rawalakot (UPR), organized a seminar titled *"Bridging the Gap from Academic Research to Action: Evolving Partnerships for Translating Theory into Environmental and Climate Solutions."* The event was held in collaboration with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK).



The session was graced by Prof. Dr. Imtiaz Hussain, Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Poonch as the chief guest, and Mr. Shafique Abbasi, Director, EPA Muzaffarabad, as Guest Speaker. Faculty members, postgraduate students,

and representatives from EPA actively participated. Mr. Shafique Abbasi highlighted the importance of converting academic findings into practical applications to address pressing environmental and climate issues. He emphasized research-based policymaking, institutional linkages, and community partnerships as key drivers of sustainable environmental management. In his welcome address, Dr. Aqila Shaheen, Chairperson, Department of Soil and Environmental Sciences, appreciated EPA-AJK for its continued collaboration and shared ongoing research initiatives on soil conservation, climate-smart agriculture, and pollution monitoring. The seminar concluded with an engaging discussion session and a mutual commitment to strengthen academia-government partnerships for advancing environmental protection and climate resilience in AJK.

Symposium on "Sustainable Soil Health Management in the Wake of Climate Change for Food Security"

Soil Science Society of Pakistan organized a National Symposium on "Sustainable Soil Health Management in the Wake of Climate Change for Food Security" in collaboration with the Department of Soil and Environmental Sciences, MNS University of Agriculture Multan on May 22, 2025. The president SSSP Prof. Dr. Azeem Khalid welcomed the participants and presented his vision for the professional society. The invited keynote speakers including Prof. Dr. Hafiz Naeem Asghar, Institute of Soil and Environmental Sciences, University of Agriculture Faisalabad, and Dr. Muhammad Farooq Qayyum, Associate Professor, Department of Soil Science, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan presented their contributions to research for the betterment of soil health and development.



The Guest of Honor Prof. Dr. Zahir A. Zahir concluded the symposium with words of applause for the

presenters and organizers for the arrangement of such a wonderful gathering of academia, industry and research wing professionals, particularly for South Punjab region. The President SSSP and Guest of Honor presented Souvenirs to the speakers. Whereas at the end, the President SSSP presented a Souvenir to Prof. Dr. Zahir Ahmad Zahir as a token of acknowledgment of his services to the SSSP and professional development of soil science community.

Seminar on "From Space to Soil: Application of Geo-Spatial Technologies in Soil Resource Mapping and Management"

The Department of Soil and Environmental Sciences, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Poonch Rawalakot (UPR), organized a seminar titled *"From Space to Soil: Application of Geo-Spatial Technologies in Soil Resource Mapping and Management."* The event was conducted in collaboration with the Department of Geology, University of Poonch Rawalakot.

The seminar aimed to highlight the significance of modern geo-spatial tools such as remote sensing (RS), Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and satellite-based data analysis for precise soil resource assessment, monitoring, and sustainable land management. The keynote address was delivered by Dr. Amir Asghar, Department of Geology, who elaborated on the practical applications of GIS and RS in identifying soil variability, degradation hotspots, and land-use planning. In his opening remarks, Dr. Aqila Shaheen, Chairperson, Department of Soil and Environmental Sciences, appreciated the Department of Geology for its technical collaboration and emphasized the need to integrate spatial technologies with field-based soil studies for effective resource management. The event concluded with an interactive discussion and a shared commitment to promote interdisciplinary collaboration in soil and environmental research.



Bridging Science and Practice Farmer Field day I

Under the ICARDA-USDA collaborative initiative "Fertilize Right Pakistan," the Land Resources Research Institute (LRRI), NARC, organized a series of four Farmer Field Days (FFDs) in October across major rice-growing areas of Gujranwala District—including Chota Machrala, Lalupur Bangla, Tatlay Mali, and Kotli Matwallian. The events aimed to improve farmers' knowledge of

nutrient management, fertilizer use efficiency, and sustainable rice production practices through field demonstrations and participatory learning. The activities, held under the broader project promoting science-based, climate-resilient, and resource-efficient farming systems in Pakistan, drew active participation from farmers, researchers, and extension workers. Collaborating partners included representatives from Forman Christian College University (FCCU)—Mr. Rizwan Yasin and Mr. Nayalash Lashari—and Dr. Zaheer Abbas from NIGAB, NARC. Dr. Tariq Sultan, Senior Director LRRI, served as chief guest, while Dr. M. Humair Ahmed Malik led technical sessions on 4R stewardship and Biozote use to enhance nutrient efficiency. Distinguished guests Dr. Waqar Akhtar, Dr. Ishaq Khan, and Dr. Zaheer Abbas also attended, and farmers received hands-on guidance on balanced fertilizer application, soil health, and best practices for higher rice productivity.



Farmer Field Day II

The Soil Chemistry Section, AARI, Faisalabad, organized a Farmers' Day to highlight the importance of Boron-Coated Urea in improving soil fertility and crop productivity. Researchers shared that nitrogen deficiency affects nearly 100% of Pakistan's soils, while 50% are boron deficient. Studies at AARI indicate that Boron-Coated Urea can increase crop yields by up to 10% and reduce ammonia losses by about 35%. Dr. Ifra Saleem, Senior Scientist, emphasized the central role of agriculture and livestock in Pakistan's economy, while Dr. Abid Niaz, Chief Scientist, stressed enhancing soil fertility and organic matter to sustain productivity and combat climate change. Dr. Qudsia Nazir, Dr. Sajid Mahmood, Dr. Aftab Ahmad, and Dr. Arfan-ul-Haq appreciated the public-private collaboration behind the development of Boron-Coated Urea. Imran Ahmad from the private sector noted that such partnerships are helping deliver advanced technologies directly to farmers. The event was attended by Principal Scientists Dr. Aleem Sarwar,



Dr. Hafeezullah Rafa, Dr. Muhammad Arif, Dr. Zia Muhammad Ishaq Lashari (Deputy Director), and a large number of progressive farmers and agricultural experts. The participants acknowledged that AARI Faisalabad, NIAB and the private fertilizer industry are playing a pioneering role in promoting profitable, sustainable agriculture and strengthening Pakistan's food system.

Seminar entitled “Regenerative Sindh-Farming for Tomorrow” Held at SAU

The Department of Soil Science, Sindh Agriculture University Tandojam, in collaboration with TrashIt organized a Seminar entitled “Soil Health Week 2025” under the theme “Regenerative Sindh – Farming for Tomorrow” on 24th September 2025. The event aimed to promote sustainable agriculture and innovative farming practices with a special focus on soil health. The keynote address was delivered by Mr. Nick Padwick, a UK-based soil health expert with over 40 years of experience. Prof. Dr. Altaf Ali Siyal, Vice Chancellor of SAU, graced the occasion as Guest of Honour. The session, held at the Auditorium Hall, Faculty of Agricultural Engineering and Technology, and encouraged students, researchers, and farmers to adopt regenerative techniques for improving soil productivity and ensuring environmental sustainability.



Promotions/ Appointments/ Postings

Dr. Zahir Ahmad Zahir has joined the University of Faisalabad as Director ORIC after retirement from the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad. He is a renowned Soil Microbiologist credited with developing microbial ACC-deaminase and allelopathic bacteria technologies. With over 200 research papers, two national patents, and several prestigious awards including the PAS Gold Medal (2010), Dr. Zahir has made remarkable contributions to agricultural research. In recognition of his scientific leadership, he was elected Fellow of the Pakistan Academy of Sciences.



Dr. Sair Sarwar has assumed the charge of Director, Administration, at the National Agricultural Research Centre (NARC), Islamabad. Prior to this assignment, he served as



Director of the Agri Polytechnic Institute, NARC. His leadership and rich experience are expected to further strengthen the administrative and institutional capacity of NARC.

Dr. Abid Hussain appointed as Executive Member (Coordination) at the Punjab Agricultural Research Board (PARB). Currently serving at MNS University of Agriculture, Multan, Dr. Hussain is recognized for his contributions to soil health, innovation, and academia–industry collaboration. His selection highlights the growing role of soil scientists in advancing sustainable agriculture and research coordination in Punjab.



Dr. Tauseef Tabassum has been promoted from Senior Scientific Officer to Principal Scientific Officer at the Land Resources Research Institute, NARC, Islamabad. His promotion reflects his valuable scientific contributions.



Dr. Munazza Yousra has earned a well-deserved promotion to Senior Scientific Officer. Currently posted at the Land Resources Research Institute, NARC, Islamabad where she continues to play an active role in advancing research on soil and land resource management. She is recognized for her dedication and valuable research contributions.



Dr. Muhammad Imran, Principle Scientist, NIAB Faisalabad has been conferred the title of Associate Professor by the Pakistan Institute of Engineering and Applied Sciences (PIEAS), Islamabad in recognition of his active participation in the academic program of Nuclear Institute of Agriculture & Biology College, PIEAS, Islamabad.



Mr. Shoaib Ahmad has been promoted from Scientific Officer to Senior Scientific Officer. He is presently serving at the Land Resources Research Institute (LRRI), NARC, Islamabad. This promotion reflects his continued commitment and valuable professional contributions.



Dr. Humair Ahmad Malik has been promoted from Scientific Officer to Senior Scientific Officer. He is currently serving at the Land Resources Research Institute (LRRI), NARC, Islamabad. This well deserved promotion acknowledges his dedication and scientific contributions.



Congratulations to all of them from SSSP

Sindh Chapter of Soil Science Society of Pakistan is delighted to announce the appointment of **13** Soil Science Graduates as **Agriculture Officers** in the Agriculture Extension Sindh. These graduates include **Mr. Muhammad Adnan Khan, Mr. Aslam Khan Gadehi, Mr. Saqib Hussain Rajper, Mr. Shafiq Ur Rahman Memon, Dr. Mukesh Kumar, Ms. Khushboo Vistro, Ms. Iqra Sultan Rajput, Ms. Nawal Memon, Ms. Nafisa Baloch, Mr. Muhammad Bari, Mr. Mujahid Hussain, Mr. Osama Shaikh, Mrs. Sana Memon, Ms. Zahida Junejo and Ms. Rija Fatima.** SSSP heartily congratulates all of them for embarking on their professional journey.

Ms. Aneela Riaz, is posted at Soil Bacteriology Section, AARI, Faisalabad as Senior Scientist u/s 9 of PCS Act 1974, against a vacant post, after returning from the PhD study leave. Earlier she was nominated for PhD study from University of Agriculture, Faisalabad.



Mr. Muhammad Suhaib has been promoted to Senior Scientific Officer at the Land Resources Research Institute, NARC, Islamabad. His dedication and hard work have paved the way for this remarkable achievement.



Dr. Sonia Sumreen has been promoted to Senior Scientific Officer at the Land Resources Research Institute (LRRI), NARC, Islamabad. This promotion is a testament to her professional excellence and dedication.



Mr. Mohsin Raza has been promoted to the position of Senior Scientific Officer at the Land Resources Research Institute, NARC, Islamabad. He is currently doing his Ph.D. from Northwest A&F University, China.



Mr. Muhammad Saleem, Senior Scientist (Soil Science-Lab/BS-18), Soil & Water Testing Laboratory, Okara is transferred and posted as Senior Scientist (Soil Science-Lab/BS-18) at Provincial Pesticide Reference Laboratory, Kala Shah Kaku.



Dr. Muhammad Chohan, Principal Scientific Officer, has assumed the charge as Director, PARC-National Sugar and Tropical Horticulture Research Institute (NSTHRI) Thatta.



Ms. Hajra Ibrahim has been promoted to the position of Principal Scientist and entrusted with the charge of Director, Orchard Nutrient Management Research Institute, HRC Mirpurkhas, on July 2025.

Mr. Riaz Noor Panhwar, Principal Scientific Officer, PARC, Arid Zone Research Center (AZRC), Umerkot has been transferred and posted to PARC-National Sugar and Tropical Horticulture Research Institute (NSTHRI) Thatta.



Scholarships and Post-Docs

Mr. Asif Ali Mastoi, Lecturer, Department of Soil Science, Sindh Agriculture University, Umerkot Campus has been awarded a PhD Scholarship in Ecology and Environmental Sciences at Hainan University, China under the Chinese Government Scholarship (CSC) program.



Dr. Ambrin Baby Rajput, Senior Scientist, Soil Fertility Research Institute, Agriculture Research Sindh, Tando Jam has been awarded the "National Post-doctoral Fellowship" by the Sindh HEC at the International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences (ICCBS), University of Karachi.

Research Award

Dr. Azhar Hussain, a dynamic young Soil & Environmental Microbiologist, at the Islamia University of Bahawalpur has been awarded the Agricultural Youth Award "Researcher of the Year 2025" by the National Agricultural Youth Commission (NAYC), Islamabad, Pakistan. The award was presented during the Pakistan Agro Show 2025 at the International Expo Centre, Lahore, in recognition of his outstanding contributions to teaching and research in soil science, particularly in sustainable agriculture and soil health management. Dr. Hussain is currently serving as an Associate Professor in the Department of Soil Science at the Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan. This recognition highlights the vital role of young researchers in addressing the country's agricultural challenges and promoting innovation for food security.



PhD Completion

Ms. Nadia Afsar has successfully defended her PhD thesis under the supervision of Dr. Aqila Shaheen. Her research focused on soil erosion and nutrient loss, addressing critical challenges that impact land fertility and crop productivity. The study presents practical and sustainable solutions for improving soil management and enhancing agricultural output.



Ms. Nadia Sabir also successfully defended her PhD under the supervision of Dr. Majid Mehmood Tahir. Her research explored strategies to enhance soil carbon reserves, a vital component of soil health and climate resilience. A portion of her work was conducted at The Ohio State University, USA, under the mentorship of renowned soil scientist Dr. Rattan Lal.



Foreign Training

Soil Science Graduates from Sindh, **Mr. Zohaib ur Rehman Bughio**, **Ms. Durshana Khan**, and **Ms. Khusbhoo Vistro** (Agriculture Officers, Agriculture Extension Sindh) and **Dr. Umeed Ali** (Farm Manager, Tassco Seed Corporation) have successfully completed 03 months training at China, under the "Prime Minister Initiative for Capacity Building of 1,000 Agriculture Professionals in China, Batch-I. The training, held from April 16 to July 17, 2025, included lectures, practical sessions, and field visits supervised by leading Chinese agricultural experts and trainers.



Meryl William Fellowship

Dr. Munazza Yousra, Senior Scientific Officer NARC has been selected for the highly competitive Meryl Williams Fellowship (MWF), managed by Tetra Tech International Development on behalf of the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR). The fellowship aims to strengthen leadership and gender equity in agricultural research and



development across the Asia-Pacific region. Her selection reflects her professional excellence, leadership potential, and commitment to advancing agricultural innovation and capacity building. Dr. Yousra will now formally join the fellowship international cohort, representing Pakistan among distinguished professionals from across the region. She is currently serving as Senior Scientific Officer at the Land Resources Research Institute, NARC, Islamabad.

Retirement

Dr. Niaz Ahmad retired as Associate Professor from the Department of Soil Science, Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan. Over the 35 years of his service, he served about 10 years in Academia and 25 years in Research at various laboratories including Pesticide Quality Control Lab Multan, Soil and Water Testing Lab for Research Multan, Soil Salinity Research Institute Pindi Bhattian, and Soil Fertility Research Institute Lahore of the Ayub Agricultural Research Institute Faisalabad. Dr. Niaz has also served as Senior Vice President in SSSP cabinet of 2023-24. Moreover, Dr. Niaz published more than 100 articles, completed various research projects funded by HEC, PARC, and PSF, and produced number of students. He is also recipient of various prestigious awards and known for academia-research linkages.



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IMPORTANT DATES

Opening of Online Abstract Submission

October 15, 2025

Abstract Submission & Registration Deadline

January 15, 2026

Notification of Accepted Abstracts

March 15, 2026

Technical Program Notification

April 15, 2026

Deadline for Accommodation Reservation

April 20, 2026



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